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Grains Of Wheat, Part 2

Meditations On The Spiritual
Life
(1883)



Elizabeth Harcourt Mitchell



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GRAINS OF WHEAT

PART II.

MEDITATIONS on the SPIRITUAL LIFE

BY

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6 PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.

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GRAINS OF WHEAT

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GRAINS OF WHEAT

PART II.

PREFACE.

IT IS REFRESHING to turn from self to the Only Perfect One ; refreshing to forget one's own sins and infirmities, and to gaze on the infinite virtue, the perfect strength of the LORD JESUS. Those who have been helped by the first series of this work, 'The Meditations on the Spiritual Life,' will therefore perhaps be inclined to regard with favour this effort to help them made by one who knows well what it is to be in want of help.

The plan of the Meditations is very simple. The series begins with the eight greater Antiphons, or key-notes, formerly used before and after the Magnificat on the eight days before Christmas, and intended to bring the Thought of JESUS, as unveiled in prophecy, prominently before Christians. The following Meditations are mostly founded upon that well-known devotion, 'The Litany of the Holy Name;' in which the titles of Our LORD are taken up one after another, and made the ground of the petitions, 'Have mercy upon us,' and 'Deliver us.'

PREFACE

It is a pleasure to have this book put in the hands of those who are interested in the history of the United States and the history of the world. The book is written for the general reader who has a desire to know the history of the United States and the history of the world. The book is written for the general reader who has a desire to know the history of the United States and the history of the world. The book is written for the general reader who has a desire to know the history of the United States and the history of the world.

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GRAINS OF WHEAT.

MEDITATIONS.

Q Wisdom.

‘Come, HOLY GHOST,’ &c.

First Prelude. Picture : JESUS CHRIST delivering the Sermon on the Mount.

Second Prelude. Prayer : O GOD, grant me grace that my understanding may be enlightened, and my will moved, in order that this meditation may be profitable to Thy glory, and the particular needs of my soul.

CONSIDERATION.

‘Wisdom is the principal thing, therefore get wisdom.’

Students of old spent months and years following those who could teach them wisdom. The ancient Greeks walked up and down the porches learning and teaching, hanging on the words of those who could unfold to them the principles of philosophy. The Jewish youths have been known to lie half frozen in the snow

outside the windows of the learned to catch the faintest sound of their precious accent. And in later days large sums have been paid to the worldly wise for their wisdom, and the word 'thinker' has become almost a title of honour. The truest Wisdom is to be had freely, without money and without price ; but the truest Wisdom is the least valued, because it is invaluable. The human mind cannot reach to the height of its intellect, the human heart cannot comprehend the depth of its love. This Wisdom is GOD the SON, the man JESUS CHRIST.

APPLICATION.

What am I seeking? Am I seeking wisdom? Am I seeking anything at all? Am I even making as much use of my intellect as one of the wise Pagans of old—as one of the Hebrews of the ancient law? GOD is continually calling me to come and learn in His schools of wisdom ; the porch there is long, and wide, and free to all ; His philosophers walk up and down, ready to teach and anxious to help ; JESUS CHRIST, the true Wisdom, Himself offers to teach me what true wisdom is ; and I—prefer gossip, games, gardening, hunting, anything rather than serious study, anything rather than those things which are able to make me wise unto salvation ! When shall I behave myself like a child of Wisdom? Knowledge is not Wisdom, cleverness is not Wisdom, genius is not Wisdom. True Wisdom is the Spirit of JESUS CHRIST. Have I this Spirit? If not, why not?

AFFECTION.

O True Wisdom ! creating the world, sitting among the doctors in the Temple, teaching the people on the

mountain, I adore Thee, I worship Thine infinite perfection.

'O Wisdom ! which camest forth out of the mouth of the Most High, and reachest from one end to the other, mightily and sweetly ordering all things : come and teach us the way of prudence.'

Resolutions :

1. To spend more time in spiritual reading.
2. To remember that a child of Wisdom has nothing to do with Folly.
3. To seek every opportunity of instruction.

THOUGHT.

'I called upon God, and the Spirit of Wisdom came to me.'

O Lord and Ruler.

First Prelude. Picture : Mount Sinai with thunder-clouds and lightning.

Second Prelude. Prayer, as before.

CONSIDERATION.

Great are the Lawgivers of earth. Great were Lycurgus and Solon, great were Justinian and Napoleon, but their greatness is as nothing to the greatness of the Divine Lawgiver. As a flash of lightning to the steady light of the Sun, so is the greatness of the human lawgiver to that of the divine. How wordy and how lengthy

are the laws compiled by human intellect ! How short, how sharp, how full of meaning those carved on the tables of stone ! If men could only keep those ten, how useless all the codes of lawgivers, all the parchments of lawyers, all the pleading before the courts ! But, alas ! men cannot, will not keep those ten. And by the Incarnation of the LORD and Ruler the ten laws given to the House of Israel are supplemented by the eight beatitudes, bequeathed to the Spiritual Israel, and the LORD and Ruler becomes the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls.

APPLICATION.

Have I taken CHRIST for my LORD and Ruler, or am I governed by the maxims of the world ? I am full of admiration for the characters of the great lawgivers of the world's history ; do I study the character of the only great Lawgiver ? Perhaps my reading has been much about the constitutions and government of different countries ? Do I know the constitution of the Christian Commonwealth ? Am I acquainted with the Laws of the City of God ? And if I am acquainted with them, what has been the practical result of my knowledge ? How thankful I ought to be that the LORD and Ruler who gave the law from Mount Sinai is the same who will deliver me by His outstretched Arm, by the Hand nailed to the Cross, the Hand stretched out in blessing !

AFFECTION.

O Great LORD and Ruler ! Thou knowest my imperfections, but Thou knowest my infirmities ; the outstretched Arm moves the Pierced Hand ! 'O LORD and Ruler of the House of Israel, who appeared unto Moses

in a flame of fire in the bush, and gavest unto him the Law in Sinai : come and redeem us with an outstretched Arm.'

Resolutions :

1. To be very exact in my fulfilment of my duty to my LORD and Ruler.
2. To be very merciful to others.
3. To place GOD's commandments before the maxims and customs of the world.

THOUGHT.

'O LORD ! Thou art my God !'

O Root of Jesse.

First Prelude. Picture : The Standard of the Cross firmly fixed upon the Mountain of Victory.

Second Prelude. Prayer, as before.

CONSIDERATION.

The Root of Jesse has become the Tree of life. The Hidden Mystery has blossomed into glorious leaf. Aaron's rod blossomed in the sight of all Israel. The Standard of JESUS is now lifted up in the sight of the nations. Patience has had her perfect work. For thousands of years the plans of GOD matured, secretly, care-

fully, not even known to the Angels ; longed for by Abraham and the Patriarchs, the Root of Jesse was hidden in the ground, shooting deep down, growing stronger daily, ready to burst forth the Ensign of the Nations. The Root becomes a Rod, the Rod becomes a Tree, and the birds of the air, restless and weary, take refuge and build their nests in it.

APPLICATION.

Kings of the earth are to shut their mouths before Him : and unto Him the nations are to pray. Silence and prayer : silence for kings, and prayer for nations ;—silence for those who are ready to command ; prayer for those who are ready for tumult. Depth and strength come from silence and prayer. Let me contemplate this Root and see how I am grounded. In a little while the Root becomes a branch ; am I deeply grounded enough to become anything ? My Root must be like the Root of Jesse before my Tree can become like the Tree of Life. A Root grows in darkness and in silence ; am I anxious for retirement and the Hidden Life, or do I scorn the deep foundation and only care to make a show ? If so, my tree will fall at the first storm.

AFFECTION.

O Gracious LORD, grant me the secret, hidden, quiet, growing Life which comes from Thee, and stands firm and strong against all storms and battles. 'O Root of Jesse, Who standest for an ensign of the people, at whom Kings shall shut their mouths, unto whom the Gentiles shall pray : come and deliver us, and tarry not.'

Resolution :

1. To strengthen my foundations, in (1) Knowledge of the Faith ; (2) Self-discipline ; (3) Plans for others' good.

THOUGHT.

'Great is the mystery of Godliness.'

⓪ Key of David.

First Prelude. Picture : Our LORD with the Cross on His Shoulder.

Second Prelude. Prayer, as before.

CONSIDERATION.

A key locks and unlocks. A key opens and shuts. It unlocks and locks treasures, libraries, every secret and precious thing. Knowledge and wealth are alike kept under lock and key. When the Jewish doctors were perfect in the Law they were presented with a key to show that they could open and shut the mysteries of GOD. CHRIST is the great Keeper of the keys, He has the keys of hell and of death. He not only *has* the keys, but He *is* the Key of Heaven, the Key of the Gate to the Narrow Way. A riddle is easily read when we know the answer ; the mystery of the world is not hard to unlock when we have found the right Key. This Key is the

Key of David, the Key which unlocks the treasures of the Prince.

APPLICATION.

I am very much puzzled about the world and many other things. Life is a constant enigma, and it is hard enough to read. I have a great bunch of keys in my hand, but I cannot find one which fits the lock. Some of the keys are gold, and some are silver, some of copper, some of brass, and some of steel. None of them fit ; I have tried them all over and over again ; I have tried science, and study, and activity, and zeal, and knowledge, and logic, and hard thinking, and philosophy, and philanthropy ; all these have failed. I cannot turn the lock. Stay, here is a small key made of hard wood ; it is in the shape of a cross. I try it, it turns the lock, I stand in the presence of sparkling treasures of wealth, shining stores of wisdom !

AFFECTION.

O LORD JESU ! Key of David, and Keeper of the Keys, grant that I may no longer seek in vain for Thy Treasures ! ‘O Key of David, and Sceptre of the House of Israel, Thou that openest and no man shutteth, and shuttest and no man openeth : come and loose the prisoner from the prison house, and him that sitteth in darkness from the shadow of death.’

Resolutions :

1. In all my troubles to look to JESUS only for deliverance.
2. In all my puzzles to look to JESUS only for their solution.

THOUGHT.

‘ Knock, and it shall be opened unto you.’

☉ Orient.

First Prelude. *Picture:* The sun lighting up the east.

Second Prelude. Prayer, as before.

CONSIDERATION.

‘Oh for more light!’ was the last cry of a wise man. ‘Oh for more light!’ is the cry of the yearning soul. Turn to the east and see the ever-increasing glow of the sun rising in his glory, lighting up the whole of the dark world with his beauty. The world is full of colour, but colour is nothing until touched by his golden finger. Red, blue, yellow, are all caused by the beauty of his light. Bright is the sun to the world, but brighter is Jesus to the soul. The gradual dawn of His love in the heart changes all life to richness and beauty. The touch of the Sun of Righteousness brings forth a beautiful variety in the landscape of the heart. And the primary colours are the gold of the true Faith, the Heavenly blue of Hope, the glowing fire of Charity.

APPLICATION.

Do I wish to go out and breathe the fresh air, and see this glorious sun rising over the mountains? Or, if I cannot go and meet it, do I throw open the windows and welcome the sweet light into my house? Or do I sit sulkily within, for fear of seeing something I do not

wish to see, and shut the shutters close, and light my own little farthing rushlight? Up! Up! for shame! I will no longer take a narrow selfish view of life, but beg this great glorious Sun of Righteousness to warm me and to light me, that I may be lost in His glory instead of sitting in darkness. My own little candle I may have all to myself, but what a miserable thing it is! The glorious light of the Sun of Righteousness is for all; let me go forth and worship Him, though He show me my sins in the glare of the noonday.

AFFECTION.

O Eternal Light! illumine the dark corners of my heart, light me first with Thy knowledge, and then warm me with Thy love. 'O Orient brightness of the Eternal Light, and Sun of Righteousness: come and lighten them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death!'

Resolutions:

1. To seek the Light at any cost.
2. To strive to bring the Light to others.
3. To imitate the Sun of Righteousness in warming as well as lighting.

THOUGHT.

'In Thy light shall we see light.'

Q King of the Gentiles.

First Prelude. Picture : The wise men from the East offering gifts to the Holy Child.

Second Prelude. Prayer, as before.

CONSIDERATION.

King of the Gentiles, King of the Peoples, King of the whole Earth. Many forms of government prevail throughout the world, and many books are written about them. There are empires, kingdoms, republics ; and also countries without any government at all. Many treatises have been written as to what is the best form of government, and many battles have been fought about the same question, but the world has not yet learnt that the only government which can give real happiness is that of the little Child who was laid in a manger. Yet whether they will or no, He is, and must be King ; the devil who is the prince of this world, the prince who betrayed his trust, will be cast out, and the kingdom of that little Child shall endure for ever. He is the Corner Stone, the angle of the wall, joining Jews and Gentiles fast together. He is the Desire of all who long for Truth and Peace, and this desire will, one day, be amply satisfied.

APPLICATION.

Within my heart are many passions striving for the mastery. Within my mind are many ambitions striving

for the kingdom. Violent intrigues, terrible battles, are making themselves felt ; there is only One who can make peace ; there is only One who can rule well, and He is the King of the Gentiles. He is, and must be my King ; is He also my Desire ? Do I wish for that white shining Corner Stone making the two walls one ? Do I wish for order and good government, or do I prefer violence and anarchy ? I will go to Him, and He will hold out His sceptre to me, and make my heart bright and peaceful by restoring its proper balance, and taking it under His own beneficent rule.

AFFECTION,

O CHRIST, Thou art my King ! Be Thou also my longing Desire. Bring all my thoughts and impulses under Thy loving rule. ' O King of the Gentiles, and their Desire, the Corner Stone, Who madest both one : come and save man, whom Thou hast made out of the dust of the earth.'

Resolutions :

1. To be a loyal subject to such a holy King.
2. To look constantly for His final triumph.
3. To prepare for it by seeking union with all those who love Him.

THOUGHT,

' Thy kingdom come.'

© Emmanuel.

First Prelude. Picture : Our LORD in the Manger.

Second Prelude. Prayer, as before.

CONSIDERATION.

What is the meaning of the word Emmanuel? It means 'God with us.' It means that the glorious King of all Creation deigns to become a child amongst the poor. 'God with us;' behold Him in the manger—prepared to live a toilsome troublesome life, a life of self-forgetfulness, caring not for Himself, but for the sorrows and sufferings of others. 'God with us;' behold Him on the Altar, waiting there so calmly, so patiently, to be the Food of hungry souls, to be the balm of wounded hearts; so often neglected, two or three only out of thousands caring for Him and recognising Him. 'God with us;' behold Him in the heart, growing there and filling it with sacramental life, enlightening, strengthening, pacifying, making the weak strong and courageous, making the strong gentle and forbearing.

APPLICATION.

Can I take this word to myself? EMMANUEL, God with us? Is He 'God with me'? If not, why not? Have I desired Him? If He is not my Desire, He cannot be my SAVIOUR. Who then, and What, is my

desire? The little Child in the cradle must be my example of Humility. The Sacrifice on the Altar must be my example of Immolation. The presence of GOD in my heart must be my most earnestly longed-for blessing. Do I move, think, speak, act, as if this Presence dwelt in me? Every Christian should be a Holy of Holies for the Shechinah to dwell in; but in order to attain this great honour, the Presence must be longed for, and the place prepared for it. It will not do to fill His place with meaner things. Is my heart full of Him? Is it waiting for Him? Is it full of other things?

AFFECTION.

My Desire! My SAVIOUR! Grant that I may desire thee more earnestly! May no earthly love, no love of self, take possession of the place which should be kept sacred to Thee! 'O EMMANUEL! King and Lawgiver, the Desire of all nations, and their SAVIOUR: come and save us, O LORD, our GOD.'

Resolutions:

1. To seek oftener the Presence of GOD on the Altar.
2. To reverence the Presence of GOD in my neighbour.
3. To cherish the Presence of GOD in my heart.

THOUGHT.

'In Him we live, and move, and have our being.'

Q Virgin of Virgins.

First Prelude. Picture : The HOLY CHILD between St. Mary and St. Joseph.

Second Prelude. Prayer, as before.

CONSIDERATION.

The only perfect Example of Purity.—Pure in body, pure in mind, pure in heart, pure in motive. The Wonder of Wonders ! The Pearl of Purity, attracting the Daughters of Jerusalem, and drawing them after Him even to the foot of the Cross ! Forecast of the love of the Altar which draws chosen souls to the love of holy virginity, and causes them to bring forth spiritual children rejoicing the Heart of the Eternal Father. ‘Without Holiness no man shall see the LORD,’ but the Holy One can give us His Holiness. ‘We shall see Him as He is’: and every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure.’ The whole life must therefore be a preparation for the Vision of God. What a work ! what a trial !—a fiery trial to many, but the victory is the most glorious which man can gain, for ‘Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God,’ and the Virgin of Virgins hath spoken these words,

APPLICATION.

Do I always remember that I am a follower of the Virgin of Virgins ? Am I careful to keep the flesh under rule and discipline, so that I may govern it instead of it

governing me? Then what is the habitual bent of my mind? Do I shun all literature calculated to raise unwholesome thoughts? Do I shun rather than seek the knowledge of evil? Then, as to my heart: do I seek the friendship of those who are pure-minded in preference to those who may be far more amusing in the world's opinion, but whose tastes and thoughts are tainted by the thick atmosphere of evil jests? Remember the friendship of the LORD and St. John, of St. Mary and St. Elizabeth, and take them as models. My aims and motives too should be pure, and seeking only the glory of the Virgin of Virgins. All double-dealing should be abhorrent to me; and I must not forget that the prophets of the Old Testament speak of idolatry as spiritual impurity, therefore everything that comes between my GOD and me, and draws my heart from Him, must be shunned as utterly destroying the soul's Virginity.

AFFECTION.

O Divine Example of Purity! make me pure! May I grow in the Sacramental Life, may I grow in the Following of Thee! 'O Virgin of Virgins, how shall this be? For neither before Thee was any like Thee, nor shall there be after. Daughters of Jerusalem, why marvel ye at me? The thing which ye behold is a Divine mystery.'

Resolutions:

1. To give up all doubtful friendships.
2. To avoid all doubtful literature.
3. To bring all things to the touchstone of the LORD's Purity.

THOUGHT.

'With GOD all things are possible.'

The Fountain of Life.

First Prelude. Picture : A Fountain sparkling in the sunshine.

Second Prelude. Prayer, as before.

CONSIDERATION.

'Living Water !' what a treasure in a hot thirsty land! A never-failing Fountain.—Whenever I go to draw from it no fears need cross my mind as to failure ; it is always bubbling, sparkling, running over. It is *living*, fresh and lovely ; it is *never failing*, abundant and immense ; it is free, there is nothing to pay, no rate, no fee. This Fountain is CHRIST—'I am the Living Water.' The difficulty is to bring a vessel large enough. I bring a little bottle when He wishes me to bring the largest pitcher I can find. The difficulty is to avoid being overwhelmed by the torrent of His mercies. I ask Him for a little, and He gives me an immensity : the fountain gives rise to a brook, the brook to a river, the river to a sea. The living water began with baptism, the sacrament of illumination ; it will end with the river of life flowing out from the New Jerusalem.

APPLICATION.

The living water is pouring out its streams close to me ; but I am often too idle to bring my pitcher, or to fill it. The garden of my soul is sterile and arid, and yet

I neglect the only means of keeping it fresh and green. But perhaps I take advantage of the Fountain for myself, and only forget to point it out to others; let me rejoice in the sparkling stream and joyfully make it known. And I too must imitate that Fountain with all the powers of my soul. A pure fountain of water is clear, refreshing, active, playful, sparkling, cheerful, vivifying, fertilising; in fact, thoroughly healthy and wholesome. Is my soul like this? Or am I morbid and stagnant, self-centred, muddy, lazy, dull, melancholy, and anything but a joy and a refreshment to others?

AFFECTION.

O dear and blessed Fountain of Life! I thank Thee for all Thy graces, all Thy blessings, so often unheeded; I pray Thee to let Thy joy spring up within my heart that it may be a joy to others as well as to myself.

Resolutions:

1. To bring a much larger vessel to the Fountain of Life.
2. To point the Fountain out to others.
3. To keep the Fountain of my joy flowing and sparkling for the use of others.

THOUGHT.

‘Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters!’

The Beginning and the End.

First Prelude. Picture : The circle of eternity.

Second Prelude. Prayer, as before.

CONSIDERATION.

Alpha and Omega : the First and the Last. When this world was chaos, CHRIST the Eternal Wisdom existed, and by Him all things were made. When heaven and earth shall pass away, CHRIST will be reigning over all. He is the beginning of the spiritual life in man ; as by Him all things belonging to the material creation were made, so by Him all things belonging to the life of the Spirit live and move and have their being. Shut CHRIST out of the world, all would again be chaos ; shut CHRIST out of the soul, darkness and confusion would immediately follow. He is the Beginning, and in Him we must have our beginning. He is the End, and in Him we must have our end if we would ever find true rest. If our beginning is in Him, and our end is in Him, the line from one to the other must be the walk with God.

APPLICATION.

Learning and philosophy are sorely exercised about the origin and the end of all things ; the problem may be solved in one word—CHRIST. Do I realise that my spiritual life began in Him, and that He must be my end, otherwise I have no life at all? Do I strive to begin

every day with Him and end every day in Him? And in all the works that I undertake, little or great, is He the Beginning and is He the End? Tried by this standard, how utterly mean and unworthy do many of my pursuits and occupations appear! How small, how selfish, and how cowardly! The knowledge, the feeling, that CHRIST is the beginning and end of all things ought to give me such a noble confidence, such a holy indifference, that nothing should be able to shake my peace and trust; and the realisation of this great truth ought to take away all petty aims, all worldly ambitions. Has it done so with me?

AFFECTION.

O Holy JESUS! the Beginning and the End of all things, I thank Thee for the work Thou hast been pleased to perform in me; I pray Thee to form my spirit after the pattern of Thine own Eternal Wisdom, and to make me reject everything which does not begin and end in Thee.

Resolutions:

1. To watch more carefully for the work of CHRIST in my soul.
2. To reject all work and plans which have not CHRIST for their aim.
3. To feel that a thing which does not begin in Him can never end in Him.

THOUGHT.

‘As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be.’

Jesus of Nazareth.

First Prelude. Picture: JESUS helping in the carpenter's shop.

Second Prelude. Prayer, as before.

CONSIDERATION.

Think of the little country town ; think of the glorious townsman—JESUS the Saviour. Nazareth, a rough little city built upon the side of an extinct volcano, in a despised province. 'Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?' Yes, the Home of the Holy Family stood there, sanctifying that rough city ; a Home of sweet affection and consecrated toil, and never-ending prayer. How often JESUS must have prayed upon the house-top and looked down upon that city sleeping in the moonlight ; and prayed for it still more earnestly because He knew that His fellow-citizens would one day lead Him to the brow of the hill and try to cast Him down. His own city cast Him out, He was despised and rejected of men. He was JESUS of the whole world, yet He scorned not to be called 'JESUS OF NAZARETH'!

APPLICATION.

How am I behaving in the city, village, parish, wherein I dwell? Am I contented, or do I wish to be in another place? Do I despise the little country village, and think it too small for my aspirations? I will think of JESUS of Nazareth in that small mountain city. Do I consider

myself hidden and my talents wasted in some obscure position in a great city like London? I will think of JESUS in the carpenter's shop. Do I feel that my duties in some lonely parish are growing commonplace and uninteresting? I will think of JESUS using the plane, and the saw, and the chisel, day after day. Do I fancy my services unrecognised and my fellow-townsmen not only ungrateful but hostile? I will think of the brow of the hill and the gentle Jesus led out to a violent death.

AFFECTION.

O JESUS of Nazareth ! I thank Thee for Thy Hidden Life and for the lowly service to Thine own City. Give me grace to fill the duty of my station without a murmur, and without a hope of earthly reward or acceptance.

Resolutions :

1. To serve willingly in private or public capacity, not considering the insignificance of the place I serve.
2. To be content to be unknown ; and if known to be treated ungratefully.
3. Cheerfully to leave any post or dwelling, remembering that the rejection of men is often the call of God.

THOUGHT.

‘He that is faithful in little is faithful also in much.’

Son of David.

First Prelude. Picture : A Royal crown.

Second Prelude. Prayer, as before.

CONSIDERATION.

JESUS, our King, is, in His human nature, of royal lineage. He is descended from the most striking figure of Jewish history—the warrior, the poet-king. Divine in His heavenly origin, royal in His earthly origin. He walks through His own patrimony in quiet majesty, unknown, uncared for, thinking only of the good of His subjects, caring only for the poor and the suffering. No thought of self mars the lowliness of His good deeds. His Father's glory and the salvation of men are all He cares for. The royal crown has no attractions for Him, He is looking forward to the crown of thorns. The sceptre of David is changed to the mocking reed ; the harp of David to the cry in the Garden of Gethsemane. The Son of David sees the Throne of David usurped by a selfish Edomite, and He makes no sign. The Son of David sees the judgment seat of David occupied by a Roman tyrant, and He speaks no word save 'My kingdom is not of this world.'

APPLICATION.

Am I proud of my descent? vain of my pedigree?
Or, if I have nothing to be proud of, do I wish that I

had? Very likely I am fond of great people, eager to be thought much of by them? I *have* a great ancestry, but not one that the world values. I am a member of CHRIST, a child of God, and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven. God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham, and He has been pleased to make me by His grace a true Israelite, a true Son of David. I need a greater consciousness of this royal descent, and then I need greater humility in order that, like the Son of David, I may think no office too lowly for me, no task too great. The consciousness of a noble origin gives great strength and power for noble deeds.

AFFECTION.

O Son of David! I thank Thee for adopting me into the Royal line. I pray Thee for Thy strength, Thy greatness, and, above all, for Thy humility.

Resolutions:

1. To think more of spiritual than of earthly privileges.
2. To treat my fellow-Christians as if they belonged to the same Royal Family.
3. To act as if nothing could demean a true child of God.

THOUGHT.

'I have made a covenant with my chosen : I have sworn unto David my servant.'

The Living Stone.

First Prelude. Picture : A white stone, four-square, marked with a cross.

Second Prelude. Prayer, as before.

CONSIDERATION.

JESUS is the Living Stone, white, shining, perfect in its proportions, strong, solid, close-fitting ; this stone is the basis, the foundation of the City of GOD, the hewn rock upon which His temple stands. White, beautiful, glittering, marked with the sign of the Cross, the holy wounds, JESUS is also the ornament, the finish, the joy, the cornerstone, the headstone of the Heavenly Jerusalem. Without noise, without tumult, He was being shaped and fitted for His work for thirty years ; for of Him it was said, 'He shall not strive nor cry.' Perfect in proportion, all sides of His character are equal ; there is no excrescence, there is no exaggeration. And yet there is a holy sharpness, a divine hardness, for He is a Stone of stumbling and a Rock of offence to those who do not choose to acknowledge Him. He stands in their way : they must acknowledge Him, or fall. To those who honour Him, He will be their strength, their foundation, their cornerstone, their crown.

APPLICATION.

I am, or ought to be, one of the living stones of the City of GOD. How am I fitting into my place ? Some of

Hiram's great stones for the Temple were more than thirty feet long ; if I am not one of these magnificent stones, am I content to be one of the little stones—only too happy as long as I am in the wall of the living City, and marked with the mark of the Builder? The stones of the Temple were prepared at a distance, and set up without any noise ; I am now, perhaps, undergoing the necessary shaping and hewing, I am not yet four-square, I have not yet my due proportions. O for the whiteness, the beauty, the smoothness of the great living Stone ! Oh, the joy of being a strength to the other stones, an ornament to the City of God ! Remember, too, that hardness and solidity are likewise required in a true stone fitted for the Master's use ; it must not split with the frost, nor melt with the heat, nor give way under the tread of the unfaithful ; but, like its great example, it must be a stumbling-block to the worldly—firm and immovable until the Master puts it into its place.

AFFECTION.

O Living Stone, true Foundation, glorious Corner-stone, uniting Jew and Gentile, I adore Thy firmness, Thy strength, and Thy beauty ! Make me like unto Thee, that I may be one of the white shining stones in the New Jerusalem !

Resolutions :

1. To give myself up to the hand of God to be shapen according to His will.
2. To strive for strength and solidity in those particular points in which I fail.
3. To be content to be a little stone, if I only fit in silently to the place God designs for me.

THOUGHT.

'A living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious.'

The Good Shepherd.

First Prelude. Picture : The Good Shepherd, with one sheep on His shoulder, and the rest of the flock following Him.

Second Prelude. Prayer, as before.

CONSIDERATION.

JESUS the Good Shepherd. He goeth before His sheep, and His sheep follow Him. Every danger He encounters first ; every trouble He bears first. The voice of the shepherd is sweet and kind, but it cannot touch those who are not listening. It calls so gently that many pretend they do not hear ; for it does not force itself upon men's ears. His sheep know His voice. He that hath ears to hear let him hear. The Good Shepherd is a Beautiful Shepherd, but His face is not visible to all. Only those see Him who wish to see Him. He does not force Himself upon the sight of men. The Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep. The sight of the wolf only draws Him closer to the flock ; the voice

of the spoiler only calls forth the sweetest accents of love towards His sheep. The Good Shepherd will never be at rest until there is one Fold. He cares for His sheep one by one, and He cares for the flock as a whole. He gathers each Christian to Himself in Baptism, leading him beside the still waters, feeding him in the green pastures, and He longs for the Reunion of Christendom, the one Fold under the one Shepherd.

APPLICATION.

Is it my greatest joy to be one of the sheep of the Good Shepherd? He sought me in the wilderness, He placed me on His shoulder, He carried me home. He feeds me in the green pastures of His word and sacraments; He led me beside the waters of comfort, the living water of holy baptism; He prepares a table before me against the evil spirits who trouble me, the table of His Body and Blood; He anointed my head with oil in the grace of Confirmation, the unction of the Holy Ghost. And this is not all—there is more to come; I am to dwell in the House of the LORD for ever. I bear His holy mark. It is a Cross, the Cross of His passion, and it is marked in red upon the white fleece, the white raiment He has given me, because I am purified in His Blood. Do I glory in His mark, and do I obey His voice? When He calls me, do I follow? I have erred and strayed as a lost sheep, but His voice is dear to me and His presence is sweet. 'I will arise and go to my Father.'

AFFECTION.

O Good Shepherd, behold Thy straying sheep! I adore Thy mercy, let me not wander away from Thee!

I will follow Thee wherever Thou callest me. I desire nothing but to be with Thine own Flock ; keep me safe from my own pride and my own self-will, keep me safe from the wolf and from the world !

Resolutions :

1. To listen, lest I miss the voice of the Shepherd.
2. To feed only in the pasture He has appointed for me.
3. To pray for the Reunion of Christendom.

THOUGHT.

‘The LORD is my Shepherd, therefore can I lack nothing.’

The Man of Sorrows.

First Prelude. Picture ‘Behold the Man !’

Second Prelude. Prayer, as before.

CONSIDERATION.

JESUS is the great sympathiser and the great sufferer. The climax of His suffering was in His passion, but the sufferings began with His coming on the earth. Bodily sufferings were His lot—cold and hunger, thirst and watchings, weariness from much walking and long wait-

ing ; and may we not also believe from intense labour in the carpenter's shop, for He was not one to do things by halves ? But all these were as nothing to the sorrows of His soul ; the knowledge of the meanness, and ingratitude, and unbelief of bad men ; the sympathy with the griefs, the bereavements, the struggles of the good. He is never said to have wept for Himself as He wept for the sorrow of Martha and Mary. He never wept for His own agony, but He wept for the peaceful death of a friend, and He sighed over the past miseries of the dumb. The unknown sufferings in the Garden were the accumulation of all the sorrows of all the world. ' Behold the Man ! ' was the climax of all the sorrows of His life.

APPLICATION.

I am a follower of the Man of sorrows, and yet my chief care seems to be to avoid sorrow, to do that which is pleasant, to keep out of the way of trouble. A little trouble makes me sad ; a little pain makes me impatient ; a little sorrow makes me think—never was any one so afflicted. In His great sufferings JESUS thought of the little sufferings of others ; my small sorrows make me forget the greater sorrows of my fellow-creatures, and the stupendous sorrows of JESUS. I, a follower of the Man of sorrows, ought to take suffering, sorrow, weariness as a matter of course, and, uniting myself to the sorrowful Heart of JESUS, look forth to the afflictions of others and strive to lighten them. JESUS hanging on the Cross was occupied with His Mother's sorrow. Do my sorrows make me more sympathising with the sorrows of others, or am I selfish and morbid ? Let my sorrows teach me to be a friend to the widow, a child to the childless, a

parent to the orphan. Only thus can the great mystery and the deep knowledge of sorrow be brought to bear its proper fruit.

AFFECTION.

O Man of sorrows ! help me to gaze on Thy sorrowful Face until, transformed by Thee, my heart grows like unto Thy Heart, and I weep not for myself, but for others. Self-forgetfulness is the only balm for sorrow ; help me to remember Thee and to forget myself.

Resolutions :

1. To meditate on the Passion.
2. To prefer the house of mourning to the house of mirth.
3. To give sympathy, but not to expect it.

THOUGHT.

'Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.'

The Lamb of God.

First Prelude. Picture: Jesus nailed to the Cross.

Second Prelude. Prayer, as before.

CONSIDERATION.

The lamb, the gentlest, meekest, whitest, most innocent of animals. The Lamb without spot or blemish, of

whom all the perfect lambs without spot or blemish which had been offered up to God in the morning and evening sacrifice, all the Passover lambs which had been slain by thousands in the month Abib for so many generations, were but faint types and forerunners. The whole idea of sacrifice culminates in this one pure Lamb. The other lambs were provided by man ; this Lamb was provided by God. He is the Lamb of God. 'My son, God will provide Himself a Lamb for a burnt-offering.' The other lambs were signs of sorrow for sins, but they could not take away sin ; 'the Lamb of God taketh away the sins of the world.' The white, spotless Lamb taketh away the power of the cruel wild beast. The innocent Lamb conquers by dying ; He gives up His life from the Cross on Mount Calvary ; He is worshipped on the altar of Mount Sion, the city of the living God !

APPLICATION.

The followers of the Lamb should be lamb-like—gentle, docile, kind, innocent, speechless before accusers, patient in bearing suffering, willing to be sacrificed, seeking nothing for their own. If I am not all this, I must, by the help of God, so shape and tutor my spirit that I may draw near to the character of the guileless one. Every time I am harsh, unkind, impatient, violent, grasping, or an accuser of others, I am like the fierce beast the opposer of the Lamb ; I partake of the nature of the savage world-power which is inspired by the dragon, or Satan, instead of the nature of the Lamb of God ! I must be as a lamb to men ; but I must never forget that the Lamb *belongs* to God, though it is sacrificed for men, and I, as a follower of that Lamb and a partaker of His nature, must consider that the first part of charity is love

to God, and the second part of charity is love to man, and that it is only the intense love of God which can give us the power of sacrificing ourselves for men.

AFFECTION.

O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon me and take away my sins ! Make me a partaker of Thy gentle nature, that I may be kind and docile and ready to be offered ; and that hereafter I may form part of that blessed company which, having seen and followed the Lamb in His sorrows on earth, worships Him on Mount Zion for ever and ever !

Resolutions :

1. When tempted to anger to say, 'O Lamb of God !'
2. To remember that Calvary comes before Zion.
3. To be willing to be put aside or sacrificed for others.

THOUGHT.

'Behold the Lamb of God !'

The First Begotten from the Dead.

First Prelude. *Picture:* The open Sepulchre in the grey morning.

Second Prelude. Prayer, as before.

CONSIDERATION.

JESUS CHRIST is laid to rest. The aching head is sleeping now. The thorns no longer pierce it. The hands, so often raised to bless, are cold and motionless. The feet, once so busy on journeys of mercy, are powerless and still. The LORD of Life has tasted death. But death cannot hold Him long. He is the first to rise from death. The new man puts on immortality. Whilst men are sleeping and the angels watching, His Father calls Him, and behold 'the Resurrection from the Dead.' It is no dull, lifeless article of our creed. It is no future good to look forward to with trembling, uncertain hope, but it is a certainty. It *has* begun ! He was no Lazarus who needed JESUS to call him forth ; the sacred God-head has gained the victory ; the stone may be rolled to the mouth of the Sepulchre, but it cannot keep Him there. First Begotten of the FATHER before the world was, He is now First Begotten from the dead.

APPLICATION.

JESUS, my Elder Brother, is risen from the dead. What have I now to do with death ? He has conquered death for me. What have I to do with the fear of death ? There

must be awe, there may be suffering, but those who die with Him will rise with Him. He looks back upon us to encourage us—to show us the way. Had He not been the First Begotten from the dead, how could I believe the wondrous beauty of the Resurrection-hope? The stone of the Sepulchre is rolled away for ever. He needed not the open door in order that He might go out ; but we need the open door that we may look in and see the angels and the folded grave-clothes ; and this sight shall take away all fear of death, for we are the brethren of the First Begotten from the dead.

AFFECTION.

O dearly loved First Begotten from the dead ! kindle my zeal, that I may run like St. John, and enter the Sepulchre like St. Peter, and carry the glad tidings like St. Mary Magdalene, and be so full of Thee that I may forget the fear of my own death in the joy of Thy Resurrection !

Resolutions :

1. To dwell upon Life rather than Death.
2. To hold up the Resurrection before the eyes of mourners.
3. To remember that the joy of the Resurrection has already begun in CHRIST.

THOUGHT.

‘ He is not here ! He is Risen.’

The Resurrection and the Life.

First Prelude. Picture: All the graves in all the world rent open at the sound of the trumpet.

Second Prelude. Prayer, as before.

CONSIDERATION.

There is a Resurrection to Death and a Resurrection to Life. JESUS is the Resurrection and the Life. He *has* been and *is* the Resurrection and the Life in Holy Baptism; for we are buried with Him in Baptism, and out of the waters of Baptism we rise strong and pure to the New Life. This Resurrection is always going on, and will go on till the end of the world. It is the Resurrection of Mercy, the beginning of a New Life. The final Resurrection will be the Resurrection of Justice, the Resurrection to Death as well as to Life. Millions will rise from the sea, millions will rise from the earth. What an awful awakening! what an awful rising! Saints who have written upon the subject think that the saved will rise strong and beautiful as if thirty-three years of age, the age of our LORD when He arose from the dead. However this may be, we know that we shall be like Him, and we know that the power to rise again to life is given by the Sacrament of His Body and Blood. 'He that eateth Me, shall live by Me, and I will raise him up at the last day.'

APPLICATION.

In baptism I was buried with CHRIST and rose again from the dead. Have I risen to the Life of Holiness? Only those who live the risen Life here can hope for Resurrection unto life at the last day. Are the things of CHRIST more interesting to me than the things of the world? Or do I delight in confusing the things of CHRIST with the things of the world, until I hardly know where to draw the line? At the Resurrection the line will be very clear; I shall know in a moment whether I am on the right hand or the left, amongst the sheep or the goats. Let me make a decided stand now. In the power of the Blessed Sacrament, given by Him, I will rise to newness of Life, and having begun my Resurrection here—the Resurrection of the Soul—will look forward with joyful hope to the Resurrection of the Body, the final consummation of bliss.

AFFECTION.

O LORD JESUS! the Resurrection and the Life! breathe upon the dry bones and make them live! My soul is dead without Thee! My heart is unable to love! my mind unable to think! Give life, give power, give love; make me a joyful partaker of Thy Resurrection, Thy Life.

Resolutions:

1. To remember that in baptism my soul rose from the dead.
2. To remember that by the Eucharist my body will rise from the dead.

3. To remember that in CHRIST both body and soul rise from the dead.

THOUGHT.

‘O grave, where is thy victory?’

The Keeper of the Keys.

First Prelude. Picture : Our LORD with the cross on His shoulders.

Second Prelude, Prayer, as before.

CONSIDERATION.

‘I have the keys of hell and of death.’ Yes, LORD, but also of Heaven and of Life. Wonderful are the keys of the LORD, great are the treasures they unlock. He has the key of the Scriptures. Behold Him unlocking them for the disciples, explaining to them Moses and the Prophets. He has the key of the forgiveness of sins, by which He opens the treasury of Absolution. He has the key of Hades ; He unlocked the gates of Hell, and released the souls of those who were waiting for His deliverance. He has the key of Heaven, the keys of the gates of the celestial City. He can shut out, and He can admit. And, more awful than all, He has the key of

the place of eternal punishment, the key of the prison which is locked for ever, to shut the guilty out from the sight of God.

APPLICATION.

The Keeper of the keys has opened to me already the gates of the City of GOD. By baptism He admitted me into it. Day by day He is opening to me the hard places of Scripture if I only make use of His key, the mind of the Church guided by the HOLY GHOST. The key of forgiveness I may have for the asking, for has He not given to His Priests the power of binding and loosing in His name? The keys of Hell and of Death He will use to shut off from me His dreadful judgments; only I must make use of *His* keys and not of my own; not the keys of philosophy, nor of philanthropy, nor of science 'falsely so called'—only the key of the Cross, the only key which fits the lock of all the mysteries.

AFFECTION.

O Keeper of the keys! give me the knowledge sufficient for me. Give me the help I need. Give me the spiritual insight Thou hast promised to all who ask wisdom of Thee. I acknowledge my utter helplessness; open to me, O LORD!

Resolutions:

1. In every difficulty to apply the key of the Cross.
2. In every disappointment to examine which key I have neglected.

3. In every mystery to feel certain CHRIST can unlock it for me.

THOUGHT.

‘ Knock, and it shall be opened unto you.’

The One Mediator.

First Prelude. *Picture :* JESUS at the right hand of the FATHER.

Second Prelude. Prayer, as before.

CONSIDERATION.

We have many intercessors, but only one Mediator. An intercessor is one who prays for us ; a mediator is one who stands between us and GOD. We beg our friends to pray for us, and when they have departed we do not think that their power of prayer has failed because they are nearer GOD. But we know we have only one Mediator ; One who can show what He has done for us, and say, ‘ FATHER, forgive them ! ’ Night and day this wonderful mediation is going on ; night and day it is shown forth in Heaven, the Lamb as it had been slain standing on the Altar ; the FATHER listens, the angels adore, the martyrs send forth their songs of thanksgiving ; but men on earth alone are insensible, and

prefer their little playthings and their small ambitions to joining in this worship and giving thanks for this mediation.

APPLICATION.

The voice of this Mediator goes forth for me : the wounds of this Mediator are shown for my sins. Am I grateful for this ? Do I take any notice of it at all ? The work of atonement I am dimly conscious of, the work of mediation I am seldom aware of ; I do not think about it, I do not take advantage of it, I do not join myself to it, and above all I am not sufficiently thankful for it. When the sacrifice is offered upon the Altar I must remember that this is part of that work, the re-presentation of CHRIST slain, the ' Do this in remembrance of Me ! ' Above and below, the memorial of the Death of CHRIST is continual, in the Court of Heaven, in the Church below ; only my foolish heart is blind and deaf, and responds not to the call.

AFFECTION.

O Saviour ! my heart sleepeth, but Thy Heart is ever awake ! Thy mediation lasts for ever ; my thankfulness for it endures scarcely a moment. Give me ears to hear, that I may hear Thy blessed Voice pleading for me ; give me eyes to see, that I may behold Thee pointing to Thy wounds !

Resolutions :

1. To thank Him at the Altar for His mediation.
2. To be merciful to others for the sake of His mediation.

3. To spend some time every day in intercession for others in gratitude for His mediation.

THOUGHT.

‘This Man, because He continueth ever, hath an unchangeable Priesthood.’

The Temple and the Lamp.

First Prelude. Picture : The SON of MAN standing in the midst of the seven candlesticks.

Second Prelude. Prayer, as before.

CONSIDERATION.

JESUS CHRIST is the Temple and the Light of the Temple. He has told us that He Himself is the Temple—‘Destroy this Temple and I will raise it up again in three days.’ He spake of the Temple of His Body. His Body is the Temple, His Soul is the Light of the Temple—both together are the Light of the World. Men were called to take refuge in that Temple, instead of which they destroyed it. They were offered the right of sanctuary there from all the evils of the world, and they pulled down their Place of Refuge. They tried to put out the Light, but it only burned the brighter ; they only

changed it from a bright silvery light to a consuming fire. The Lamp of the Temple was seven-branched to show universality. The Light of CHRIST is sevenfold to show catholicity. The Jews understood not the sign, neither do we understand it, but the Temple is built again, and the Lamp still burns.

APPLICATION.

Earthly Temples now are bright and glorious. Christian services are full of beauty and of light. Perhaps I have helped to make them so. Perhaps I am looking forward to doing something of this kind. If so, let me not forget who is the true Temple, who the true Lamp. When I add a stone to a Church, or place a lamp in the Sanctuary, do I think only of the earthly beauty of what I do, or still worse my own glory, or do I remember that all these things are but types of the true Temple, the true Light, the GOD-MAN CHRIST JESUS?—And only precious because they tell of Him and minister to His glory? If all these things were taken from me, and all Catholic Churches levelled with the dust, would my religion fail, or could I worship with the faithful in a field, in a barrack-room, on board a ship, or anywhere as long as the true service were rendered, the true doctrine taught? If my heart could not stand this test, my religion is nothing but a thing of architecture, music, and sculpture; a thing of circumstance, a sham. The true Temple, the true Lamp has passed away from my thoughts.

AFFECTION.

O true Temple ! O true Light ! Let me ever find
my refuge in Thee ! Let me ever draw my light from

Thee ! Thy Temple is vast and glorious, Thy light is unerring and unfailing ; LORD, I have loved the habitation of Thy House and the place where Thine honour dwelleth !

Resolutions :

1. To beautify God's Church, knowing it to represent the true Temple.
2. To adorn His Sanctuary, knowing that its light comes from the true Lamp.
3. To cultivate a strong devotion which can exist far from all outward devotional surroundings, knowing that the true Temple and the true Lamp is always at hand.

THOUGHT.

'I saw no Temple therein ; for the LORD GOD ALMIGHTY and the LAMB are the temple of it ; and the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it, for the glory of GOD did lighten it, and the LAMB is the light thereof.'

The Tree of Life.

First Prelude. Picture : The Cross blossoming into flowers and fruit.

Second Prelude. Prayer, as before.

CONSIDERATION.

In the Garden of Eden an angel with a flaming sword was placed to guard the way of the Tree of Life, to prevent man from tasting the fruit of it. In the garden of the Church the gate is wide open, and angels point the way to the Tree of Life therein. In the Garden of Eden man took and ate the fruit that was forbidden him ; in the garden of the Church men will not take and eat the fruit which is set before them. *There* the serpent tempted man to eat ; *here* the serpent tries to prevent him from eating. *There* he was obedient to the tempter ; *here* he is obedient to him also. It is easier to obey the Devil than to obey God. The Tree of Life in the midst of the garden was forbidden to the parents of the nations ; the Tree of Life in the midst of the Church is set for the healing of the nations. The Tree of Life is the mystical tree, the Tree of the Cross ; its leaf is Charity, and its fruit is JESUS Himself.

APPLICATION.

The curse is turned into a blessing, and the food of the mighty is set before me. JESUS on the Altar is the extension of JESUS on the Cross. The Fruit must be plucked before it can be eaten. Do I value this Food above all the good things of the world ? It is the choicest gift my SAVIOUR has to give. Do I try and tempt others to feed upon it ? The Devil tries to keep them away from it, for he knows that if they eat of that tree they will live for ever. There is no scarcity in the fruit of this tree. There is no lack of fruit in the winter months : summer and winter alike it bears fruit abundantly. But

though that tree knows no winter, there is often winter in my heart. Where is the hunger, the longing, the joy, the renewed strength? Where is the calling to others? the invitation to the Feast? The food of the mighty requires an open heart to receive it; the food of angels calls for a pure heart to retain it.

AFFECTION.

Tree of Beauty! Tree of Sweetness! be my nourishment for ever! O LORD JESUS CHRIST, let me hunger after Thee and feed upon Thee! and remembering that this tree is for the healing of all nations, may I help to make others partakers of its blessing. If Thy leaves can heal the nations, what cannot Thy Fruit do?

Resolutions :

1. To eat of the fruit of this Tree as often as possible.
2. To bring others under the shadow of the Tree.
3. To make known to other nations the blessings of the Tree, by taking part in missionary work.

THOUGHT.

‘I sat down under His shadow with great delight, and His fruit was sweet to my taste.’

The Pattern of Virtues.

First Prelude. Picture: St. John watching the Crucified.

Second Prelude. Prayer, as before.

CONSIDERATION.

When a painter wishes to paint for fame, he studies the works of the greatest painters. When a sculptor wishes to do his best, he seeks for instruction from the great sculptors of old, too happy if he can find even an arm or a hand to model from. When a poet wishes to perfect himself, he tries to get thoroughly imbued with the spirit of the best poets. When a sinner wishes to be a saint, he studies the character of JESUS CHRIST. What a life-long study! What a Pattern of Virtues! The humility of the child, the tenderness of the son, the truth and honesty of the good workman, the zeal of the reformer, the sympathy of the philanthropist, the devotion of the religious, the wisdom of the Ruler, the learning of the Master, the diligence of the Preacher, the patience of the Victim, the self-abnegation of the Priest, the mercifulness of the Conqueror, the generosity of the King continually sending gifts to his people—all these virtues are combined in CHRIST and glorified by Him.

APPLICATION.

Hero worship is a necessity of most men's nature. There is no harm in it when the object is worthy. It is a positive good when the object possesses supernatural

virtues. It reforms and invigorates the whole life when the object is JESUS CHRIST. Who is my hero, who should be the hero of the baptized Christian but the King of Saints? All heroes, all saints, all models of virtue are here set forth in one man, the man CHRIST JESUS. My soul, never lower thyself by seeking for a meaner model. Keep thine eyes fixed upon this Pattern of all Virtues. Every line of His character taken in detail will give me something new to copy each day, whilst the picture as a whole is dazzling in its beauty, and yet divine in its restfulness. Study one day His meekness, another day His wisdom, another day His prudence, another day His charity, and the soul will be drawn more and more to follow Him; the soul will every day grow more and more absorbed in the glorious Pattern.

AFFECTION.

O Holy Saviour! The only good and perfect One, how must Thou sorrow over the failures of men to imitate Thee! My failures are beyond number, but Thy power is beyond my weakness; guide my hand and eye, guide my heart and brain, guide my body and soul, and grant that all mine may copy Thine!

Resolutions:

1. To shut out everything which can interfere with this Pattern.
2. To follow this Pattern when out in the world, not only when at home and in church.
3. To study the detail of the Pattern as well as its general effect.

THOUGHT.

'What is that to thee? Follow thou Me.'

The Mirror of Sanctity.

First Prelude. Picture : A sheet of pure crystal reflecting everything truthfully.

Second Prelude. Prayer, as before.

CONSIDERATION.

JESUS CHRIST is the looking-glass wherein we see ourselves. Some people are very fond of contemplating their own features in a glass, and the more they look at them the more lovely they think them. There is a story of a certain Narcissus who died of love for his own form reflected in the water. He was really beautiful, and the water was so clear that it showed his beauty clearly. Some people look at themselves in wavy glass, or in bright metal objects, which distort them and make them appear much uglier than they really are. A true mirror would have shown their true nature, whether deformed or beautiful. What a looking-glass does for the outward man JESUS CHRIST does for the heart. The mirror of His holiness is the looking-glass for the Christian. The beauty of the outward man is portrayed in the outward mirror, the deformity of the inward man is clearly shown forth in the mirror of sanctity.

APPLICATION.

Can I bear to look at my heart in the mirror of His sanctity? Saints have prayed to be shown the blackness

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of their hearts, and when their prayer has been answered they have prayed again that the sight might be withdrawn, so loathsome has it been to them. Let me not shrink from the sight of my spiritual deformity. He who will show it to me is able to make my heart beautiful by the power of the Sacramental life. But I will not bring my soul to the true Mirror : I will not face the truth. I think of other people and compare myself with them, and consider myself 'not worse than others,' and perhaps rather better. I like to look at myself in a distorted medium, which distorts my heart from ugliness to beauty, and then I go away satisfied, never caring to examine the truthfulness of the mirror. One mirror is the praise of friends, another the estimate of the world, another my own opinion of myself. They are all dark, distorted mirrors ; CHRIST'S sanctity is the only true one.

AFFECTION.

O LORD JESUS CHRIST ! The only true and holy One ! Show me my own deformity ! Show me myself ! But let me not despair, for Thou who art all truth canst make me true and holy by Thy power. Only save me from self-deception !

Resolutions :

1. Whenever I am praised, to fly to the Mirror of Sanctity,
2. Never to compare myself with others.
3. Never to shun unpleasant truths.

THOUGHT.

'There is none good but God.'

The Lily of the Valley.

First Prelude. Picture : A Lily of the Valley in a lonely, shady place.

Second Prelude. Prayer, as before.

CONSIDERATION.

Purity, sweetness, humility. These speak to my heart whenever I think of a lily. There are hundreds of lilies growing together in beautiful gardens, hundreds of souls blossoming where the Beloved comes to look for them, where the Beloved feedeth among the lilies ; but the Beloved Himself is like a Lily of the Valley in a lonely shady place, one standing by itself, and there is none like unto it. JESUS CHRIST stands alone, and must be sought in the valley of Humility. All sweet things are lowly and retiring ; they do not force themselves upon the world ; and the Lily of lilies, white as snow, sweeter than all the flowers of the earth, is to be found by the faithful soul, the soul that seeketh it. Year after year, and all the year round, it blossoms in its purity, and the heedless souls pass by and never see it, whilst the faithful give thanks, and adore, and rejoice in its sweetness.

APPLICATION.

To dwell in the valley of Humility. Is this a pleasant thought, or is it a prospect from which I shrink with horror ? Self-assertion, noise, display, are more common

in the world than self-distrust, quietness, and hidden virtue. Which have most attractions for me? Am I content to let my small virtues blossom and to take no heed whether there be any passers-by to admire? Am I content to give my fragrance to God alone, knowing that He alone is the Master to whom I am vowed? or am I fussy and excitable, trying to attract the notice of my fellows, and thus losing sweetness and spoiling the whiteness of the flower? And then, if God sends other souls to me, do I give them all my sweetness, and make them glad with the joy that comes from Him? If not, the Lily of the Valley has taught my soul no lesson.

AFFECTION.

O JESUS CHRIST! True Lily of the Valley! Give me of Thy sweetness that I may pass it on to others! Give me of Thine own Humility that I may rest content beneath the Shadow of the Cross; and when I pass through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, grant that I may still find the Lily there to tell me of mine 'own true native land.'

Resolutions:

1. To choose a hidden work in preference to a showy one.
2. To be careful that the hidden life keeps pace with the outer life.
3. To give out sweetness to weary passers-by.

THOUGHT.

'His lips, like lilies, dropping sweet-smelling myrrh.'

The Rose of Sharon.

First Prelude. Picture : A Rose in its prime, glowing with beauty.

Second Prelude. Prayer, as before.

CONSIDERATION.

Beauty, richness, fragrance, these are the properties of a Rose, the queen of flowers. Beauty, richness, fragrance, these are the properties of JESUS CHRIST, the King of Saints. The Saints are the flowers in God's garden, and JESUS is the King of them all. See how His character unfolds like a rose, leaf after leaf, petal after petal, until the full beauty, the full glory is discerned, but discerned only by the eye that is trained to perceive all the full beauties of Sharon. And as the character of JESUS CHRIST gradually unfolds to us, so He unfolds to us the glories of the Catholic Faith, leaf after leaf, petal after petal, until the fulness of the truth is attained, and thus the Red Rose of JESUS purifies the White Rose of the Church, and by the Yellow Rose of Sorrow we gain the spiritual discernment which teaches us the value of both.

APPLICATION.

By the unfolding of the Rose I may learn the gradual growth of the Christian life. Day by day a new leaf should unfold ; day by day a fresh petal should shed its sweetness on the air. Growth and sweetness, these are

the signs of a Christian life ; are they the signs of mine ? Rain and dew rest within the blossom and minister to its sweetness and its growth ; tears and sorrows should make my life sweeter and fresher ; do they strengthen it, or is the discipline despised ? The Rose puts forth her thorns to prevent rude hands carelessly plucking what was not intended for them ; am I careful to keep my best love and sweetness for the Master of the Garden, and to guard my choicest gifts with the prudence of a disciplined life ? God grant that it may be so, and if it be so, then my life may be by turns the Red Rose of Charity, the White Rose of Purity, or the Golden Rose of Sanctity.

AFFECTION.

O Holy LORD JESUS ! The true Rose of Sharon ! The Flower of Love, Purity, and Holiness. I thank Thee for Thy Love, I honour Thy Purity, I worship Thy Holiness, and I pray Thee to give me grace to imitate all three, that my heart may unfold more and more beneath the light and warmth of the Sun of Righteousness.

Resolutions :

1. To expect and to strive for progress.
2. To strive for progress in God's way, not in my own.
3. To welcome gladly each new unfolding of the character of JESUS or the mysteries of the Faith.

THOUGHT.

'The desert shall rejoice and blossom as the Rose.'

Jesus, Lover of Chastity.

First Prelude. Picture: The Son of Man in the midst of the seven candlesticks, with 'eyes as a flame of fire.'

Second Prelude. Prayer, as before.

CONSIDERATION.

JESUS can see the thoughts of men. What must He see in this world of impurity ! What sights must He see ! What words must He hear ! What thoughts must He discern ! The haunts of iniquity, the words of wicked enticement, the allurements of self-love. The Holy and the Pure One, the Lover of Chastity, has to bear all these. And not only has He to behold the open wickedness of those who serve Him not, but He has to bear the hidden deceits of those who profess to serve Him. Idolatry of self, idolatry of the world, are forms of spiritual impurity ; anything which allures us from the love of God as the first and chiefest thing is a temptation to spiritual impurity. Spiritual chastity is the love of *One*, even the Love of GOD, which uproots and kills every vile affection, every frivolous longing. And this love is learnt in its fulness at the altar, where Holy things are given to the Holy.

APPLICATION.

My heart is open before God. What do the 'eyes as a flame of fire' see there ? Perhaps I think it pure and

devoted to Him. O wretched deception ! It is deceitful above all things. How shall I know my own heart ? By looking into the Heart of JESUS. It is only by the study of His character that we know what ours ought to be, and what they are. We need to be saved from our secret sins as well as those that are open before the day. Every man must be tried and searched in the deep of his heart. When I hear of an open scandal, and feel inclined to thank GOD that I am not as other men are, do I remember that the seed of that sin is most likely in my heart also, though it has not yet blossomed and borne fruit ? And what hindered it from doing so ? Grace alone, which is the undeserved favour and mercy of God.

AFFECTION.

O Lover of Chastity ! I adore Thine infinite purity, and I pray Thee that Thine eyes of flame may not only search and try me, but may burn out everything offensive to Thine honour, that I may be presented to Thee without spot at the Judgment Day.

Resolutions :

1. To cultivate Purity of the Affections.
2. To pray for Purity of the Imagination.
3. To strive for Purity of the Intellect.

THOUGHT.

‘ Without Holiness no man shall see the LORD.’

Jesus, Lover of Souls.

First Prelude. Picture : JESUS feeding the multitude.

Second Prelude. Prayer, as before.

CONSIDERATION.

JESUS, the Lover of Souls, feeds starving thousands. The care for their bodies is but a sign of the still greater care He has for their souls.—Ranging them on the grass by fifties, and feeding them with bread. He leads us in green pastures and satisfies us with the bread of Life. He feeds us not by fifties, not by hundreds, not by thousands, but by millions, for His Sacraments are free to all who will receive them, and He stands on the mountain and calls us. The Lover of Souls feeds us with His own body and His own blood. As the Pelican feeds her young, so Jesus feeds His children. He is always watching His opportunity ; no obstinacy provokes Him, no ingratitude wearies Him ; He goes up to the mountain of Myrrh, the bitterness of death cannot shake His resolution. In private He teaches Nicodemus, in public He teaches the crowd ; one day He watches Nathaniel under the fig-tree, another day He walks in Solomon's Porch. He has only one aim : He must be ' About His Father's business.'

APPLICATION.

Is my love a love for souls, or simply a love of work ?
Love of souls for the work's sake ? or love of work for the

sake of souls? This may be easily tested. For instance: if a certain person be converted by another, do I rejoice as much as if I had converted him myself? If I succeed in awakening souls, do I thankfully pass them on to fuller instruction, or am I anxious to obtain the credit of such awakening? If I have no stated work in classes or schools, or no opportunity of influencing numbers, do I thankfully seize the occasion of influencing a chance acquaintance, or dropping a word for CHRIST when alone with one of His humbler servants? If not, I do not love souls; I only love work and excitement.—And supposing I have no chance of speaking, am I diligent in praying for souls?

AFFECTION.

O JESUS, Lover of Souls! I thank Thee for Thy love for my poor soul, and I pray Thee to give me the same self-sacrificing love for the souls of others.

Resolutions:

1. To watch for opportunities of speaking to souls.
2. To be careful that I may not be a stumbling-block to others.
3. To pray for the souls of others; say, one soul at a time.

THOUGHT.

‘He loved us and gave Himself for us.’

Jesus, Lover of Peace.

First Prelude. Picture: JESUS noiselessly entering the upper room saying, 'Peace be unto you.'

Second Prelude. Prayer, as before.

CONSIDERATION.

JESUS is the Lover of Peace. He is the Fountain of Peace. He is the Possessor of Peace. He abhors a quarrel. Where strife is, there JESUS is not. His greeting is 'Peace be unto you.' The words He gave to His disciples to use when entering a dwelling were 'Peace be to this house.' The gift He gave to His disciples before His crucifixion was, 'My peace I give unto you.' The words with which He greeted them when He had arisen from the dead were, 'Peace be unto you.' And the words of the blessing in His own appointed service begin with Peace, 'The Peace of GOD which passeth all understanding.' And this peace which JESUS loves so much He possessed in all its fulness in spite of the sufferings He endured. And what is the reason that He possessed this Peace? The answer is the wonderful, deep saying, 'Lo, I come to do Thy will, O GOD.'

APPLICATION.

Peace is one of the gifts of the HOLY GHOST. Have I prayed for this gift? A gift cannot be worked for or

earned : for then it would cease to be a gift; it would be wages. Many seek for peace and fail in finding it, because they work for it, instead of simply asking for it in faith. It must be waited for ; it comes like the summer rain, gently and sweetly, and I cannot work for the rain. I must keep the soil of my heart ready, and allow no unkind thoughts, no malice or hatred, to grow therein. I must be ready to give up everything for peace except truth and the things of God ; these I have no right to give up. I must be, like JESUS, a Lover of Peace, and then the saying will be fulfilled, 'What thou ever lovest is ever thine.' I must be ready to give up a witty saying if there is a chance of its hurting another person's feelings; ready to give up a cherished scheme if strife be likely to follow. Above all, I must be perfectly resigned to the will of God, for the secret of peace of soul is to have no other will but His.

AFFECTION.

O Lamb of God ! that takest away the sins of the world, grant us Thy peace ; grant to Thy Church peace and unity ; grant to my soul the peace of God that passeth all understanding, and grant that I may communicate this peace to others.

Resolutions :

1. To pray for the Peace of the Church every day.
2. To return a soft answer when sharply spoken to.
3. To be careful not to annoy others, even when their annoyance is unreasonable.

THOUGHT.

'Great is the peace that they have who love Thy law.'

Jesus, Father of the Poor.

First Prelude. Picture : JESUS on the shore : 'Children, have ye any meat ?'

Second Prelude. Prayer, as before.

CONSIDERATION.

JESUS is not the Guardian of the Poor, not the Friend of the Poor, but the Father of the Poor. What tenderness, what sympathy in this relationship ! As a father watches and supplies the wants of his child, so JESUS watches the daily work, the daily struggle for food and clothing, the daily anxieties, the daily hopes and fears. He has told us that a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without the knowledge of God, that the very hairs of our heads are all numbered, that we are to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and that all other things will be added unto us. And He is also the Father of those who deplore the poverty of their spiritual state and pine for the true riches. He will not hurry or distress the soul that can only walk slowly ; He gently leads it, and speaks sweetly to it, and comforts it in discouragement and in depression, as an earthly father watches and encourages the child who tries to run to him with uncertain and tottering steps.

APPLICATION.

When my heart has been full of anxiety for myself or for those I love, have I gone to JESUS as my Father, the

Father of the poor, or have I contented myself with making plans and looking only for human help? Perhaps I have been all night long fishing in troubled waters, and have never looked up to see JESUS standing on the shore. Or, have I been disgusted with my own slowness and lukewarmness, with my spiritual poverty, and have sought all means of rousing myself to better things except that of going to the Father, who will not give His children a stone instead of bread? In temporal poverty 'I will arise and go to my Father'; in spiritual poverty I will do likewise. And when I see my poor neighbour suffering I will not patronise him nor act the philanthropist, but will be a father to him for the love of CHRIST; and when I see him troubled in his soul, or slow and wanting in spiritual perception, I will be very patient with him, remembering how patient my Father is with me.

AFFECTION.

O JESUS! Father of the poor! look down upon Thy children who know Thee not, and reveal Thyself to them, and increase the bonds of love between Thyself and us who know Thee, that we may look up to Thee for the Father's blessing and pass it on to others.

Resolutions :

1. To deal very tenderly with such a person's troubles.
2. To be very patient with such a person's slowness.
3. To bring my own poverty, temporal or spiritual, to JESUS as my Father.

THOUGHT.

'The mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk.'

Consolation of the Afflicted.

First Prelude. Picture: JESUS at the grave of Lazarus.

Second Prelude. Prayer, as before.

CONSIDERATION.

JESUS not only consoles the afflicted, but He suffers with them. He wept at the grave of Lazarus. He knows every pain, every trouble, whether of mind or body. His sufferings have surpassed everything that we are capable of. He stands waiting to comfort us. The oil and wine are ready in His hands : the oil to comfort, the wine to revive ; the oil to soothe, the wine to rouse. He is the true Consolation, and He also sends another Comforter, the HOLY GHOST ; and, as if that were not enough, He gives us Himself to comfort us, and bids us lay our trials at the foot of the altar. From the altars of the Church He is speaking to the sorrowful in a still, small voice—Come unto Me, all ye that are heavy laden, and I will refresh you ; but we cannot hear ' the comfort-

able words' ; the voice of the charmer is drowned by the cry of our selfishness, or the hollow consolations of the world.

APPLICATION.

I look back through life and see many afflictions. One after another they have come to me and spoken to me. Disappointment in plans, death of friends, illness and pain ; when I look back I can count many such troubles. Have they been blessings or curses to me? Each event so deeply mourned, perhaps so impatiently borne, was a message of love to me, and I would not listen to it. Then another came, and then another. Am I listening now? What has been the effect of my troubles? Have they drawn me to JESUS CHRIST, the true consolation? What is my practice after each sorrow? Seclusion, prayer, holy reading, frequent Eucharist? or, much talk, human sympathy, going abroad, travelling, seeking forgetfulness, refusing to look sorrow in the face? The sorrow which brings a soul no nearer to JESUS is a wasted message, a despised angel.

AFFECTION.

O JESUS, true Consolation of the Afflicted, I entreat Thee that I may never seek consolation in aught but Thee. Teach me the full meaning of sorrow, that I may draw water from the wells of affliction, pure living water from the source of true love.

Resolutions :

1. In trouble to fly to JESUS at once.
2. Whenever a trouble comes, to look for its message.

3. In sorrow, to make the steps of the altar my rest.

THOUGHT.

‘Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.’

Jesus, Treasure of the Faithful.

First Prelude. Picture : The Blessed Sacrament.

Second Prelude. Prayer, as before.

CONSIDERATION.

O Treasure indeed ! ‘taken and received by the Faithful.’ A treasure not to be sought for with restless anxiety like the treasures of the gold-hunters and the diamond-seekers, but a treasure ready for us, to be given, taken, and received ; a treasure hidden and secret, yet open and free to all the faithful. Most treasures bring anxiety, fear, restlessness : anxiety for more, fear lest they should be taken away, restlessness as to their use ; but this treasure brings certainty, courage, calmness, and a great longing to share it with others : it is like the light, the more it is used, the more there is of it. And amongst the countless beauties of this treasure is the knowledge that we can never probe its depth, nor rise to its height, nor comprehend its width—new beauties show

themselves at every glance, and new graces make themselves felt at every trial of it ; and, moreover, there is great certainty in it, for this Spiritual Treasure can never be taken away.

APPLICATION.

Where is my treasure, and what is it? Is it something belonging to earth, and earth alone? Is it wealth, jewels, estates? Do I pride myself upon having better diamonds than other people, or feel a secret satisfaction in having them at all when others have none? Have I set my heart upon beautiful treasures of art—pictures, enamel, china, statuary? All these things are innocent and lawful in themselves, but are they my treasure? Or have I set my heart upon the more enticing and less vulgar treasure of reputation or intellectual distinction? Is anything in my own character or my own powers of mind my treasure? Or am I placing all my affections upon, and giving all my care to, some earthly relation or friend, forgetting that every earthly love is but a stepping-stone to the true Treasure—JESUS Himself? As years pass away may I grow in spiritual discernment, and know who the only Treasure is, and be ready to give up all for Him, the Treasure which no thief can steal away from me !

AFFECTION.

O JESUS, Treasure of the Faithful, shining in my heart and on the altar, grant that I may know how to value and cling to this glorious possession ; grant that I may be willing to give up the whole world for Thee, and that I may rejoice to lead others to value Thee aright !

Resolutions :

1. To guard my Treasure with fitting care.
2. To value my Treasure beyond all earthly things.
3. To rejoice in showing my Treasure to others.

THOUGHT.

‘Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.’

Precious Gem.

First Prelude. Picture : A pure white Pearl.

Second Prelude. Prayer, as before.

CONSIDERATION.

Gems are the most precious things in the eyes of men. Gold and silver they love well, better than most material things, but gems they love best of all because they are great riches in a small space. Rubies and emeralds, sapphires and topazes are beautiful for their glorious red, green, blue, and golden hues. The diamond is splendid on account of the beauty of its light. But they all require cutting by the hand of the lapidary in order to show off their glory, whilst the pearl is perfect, and round, and white. All other jewels are found in the earth, but the

pearl alone is found in the sea. The foundations of the Heavenly Jerusalem are made of twelve precious stones, but the gates are of one Pearl, the Pearl of great price, and this Pearl, the Gem of gems, is the LORD JESUS CHRIST, who says, 'I am the door.'

APPLICATION.

To obtain this precious gem what must I do? I must sell all that I have and buy it. Woe to me if I see it, know where it is to be found, and rest content without it. All that I have? Yes. All my worldliness, all my ambition, all my love of power, all my love of self. May I not keep something back?—Some little favourite occupation, which interferes with what I ought to do for CHRIST? Some favourite little foible which interferes with my realisation of His Presence? Some sense of shame which prevents my showing bravely that I mean to put Him first and make His will the Rule of my Life? No; I must keep nothing back, I must sell *all* if I wish to possess the Pearl of great price. I must be poor in spirit if I wish to enjoy the true riches. Let me not do less than a merchant would do to obtain some priceless gem; some splendid diamond well known to history, and gleaming in the crown of kings.

AFFECTION.

O JESUS! Precious Gem, Pearl of great price, grant that I may give up all in order to obtain Thee. Grant that no earthly thing may come between Thee and me; and should it please Thee to give me this Pearl out of the bitter sea of affliction, may I grudge no sorrow, no pain, only be Thou my Gem, my All!

Resolutions :

1. To seek for JESUS Himself, and not only for His gifts.
2. To be willing to make any sacrifice for the sake of closer union with Him.
3. To recognise the fact that we must sacrifice earthly things in order to obtain the Precious Gem in all His Beauty.

THOUGHT.

'They forsook all and followed Him.'

Shrine of Perfection.

First Prelude. Picture : A Golden and a Silver Shrine glittering with Jewels.

Second Prelude. Prayer, as before.

CONSIDERATION.

A shrine is a precious thing enclosing something still more precious. Perfection is the thing the human heart longs for and cannot find. The Ark of the Covenant, the shrine of the law, is overlaid with gold, but its wood is still shittim wood, the wood which speaks of the wan-

derings in the desert, not of the rest in the Promised Land. Sometimes we find a perfect shrine, but, alas ! it is empty ; sometimes we fancy we have found perfection, but a nearer glance dispels this illusion. The Humanity of CHRIST is the Shrine ; the Divinity of CHRIST is the Perfection ; everything short of this fails and falls. The world makes many pilgrimages to the shrines of great warriors, great politicians, great inventors ; the Church makes many pilgrimages to the shrines of great saints. Let us go on a pilgrimage to the Shrine of Perfection, for there alone shall we be able to find peace to our souls.

APPLICATION.

Many are the journeys I have made ; many are the heart searchings I have had. Perhaps I have been at some weariness and expense to visit famous places—the burial-places of heroes, or the treasures where the relics of the saints are kept. Perhaps I have mourned because I cannot do so. Perhaps I have envied others who have seen all the things I have longed to see, and travelled to all the Holy Places I have longed to dwell in. How glorious to visit the Holy Sepulchre ! surely this must be the Shrine of Perfection. No, He is not there, He is risen ; I seek not a dead CHRIST, but a living one, not an empty shrine, but a full one. Every time I draw near to the Sacrament of the Altar I draw nigh to the true Shrine of Perfection ; every time I receive Him at the Altar I myself become the Shrine of Perfection, for He dwelleth in me. Do I realise the awful Majesty of this blessed vocation ? If not, why not ? My life must be a continual Pilgrimage to the Shrine of Perfection, and the Perfect One will be adored for ever in Heaven.

AFFECTION.

O Dear LORD ! who hast said 'Be ye perfect,' grant that by gazing on Thy Perfection I may receive some of Thy light and Thy glory. Grant that I may call nothing perfect but Thy perfection. Grant that my pilgrimage may be ever onward to Thee !

Resolutions :

1. To lay down everything which may impede me on my Pilgrimage, such as . . .
2. To let nothing divert me from the object of my Pilgrimage, such as . . .
3. To make my worship at this shrine not short-lived but continual.

THOUGHT.

'The captain of their salvation, perfect through sufferings.'

The Bread of Life.

First Prelude. Picture : A handful of wheat. The Bread of the Altar.

Second Prelude. Prayer, as before.

CONSIDERATION.

JESUS is the Bread of Life, and not only the Bread of Life, but the Living Bread. He gives Himself to be the Food of the Faithful. An earthly father supplies his children with bread ; an earthly mother toils to provide her family with food ; but the SAVIOUR gives Himself for our food, and with this food transforms us into Himself. Bread gives strength ; bread is the food man needs the most for his body. The Living Bread is full of strength, and without this Bread the soul of man cannot flourish. When the LORD fed the multitude in the desert, 'they did eat and were filled.' When the LORD feeds us in the Church, we have only to hunger, and we too shall be filled. To relish and long for wholesome bread we must be hungry ; to relish and long for the Bread of Life we must have a spiritual appetite. The LORD provides Angels' Bread for His children, but too often the children turn away from the Heavenly Food, and prefer the husks only fit for swine.

APPLICATION.

When I receive the Body of CHRIST I am changed into Him ; every Communion makes me more and more bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh.

What proof do I give of spiritual strength ? Am I more active and persevering in work ? More zealous in the service of God ? More able to stand against temptation ? Do I think less of annoyances ? Am I less eager for rest ? Less self-pleasing ? I must remember that this strength does not mean emotion ; it does not mean sweetness ; it does not mean ecstasy. It means

commonplace, hardworking force ; something which can be depended upon, something calm, decided, and constant. It is gained by continuous and regular feeding on the Bread of Life, just as a weak body gains strength by regular meals. Were I to leave off feeding upon the Body of CHRIST, my soul would lose this spiritual strength entirely.

AFFECTION.

O LORD JESUS CHRIST, true Bread of Life, grant that I may feed on Thee and receive strength from Thee ; give me the calmness which comes from strength, and may I do nothing in my own strength, but seek with gladness the Heavenly manna, containing in itself all sweetness.

Resolutions :

1. To communicate regularly, and with a definite rule.
2. Not to put off Communion because I am in a strange place, or away from the Church I am accustomed to.
3. To seek for Life from the Bread of Life, not from human theories and systems.

THOUGHT.

‘Bread to strengthen man’s heart.’

The True Vine.

First Prelude. Picture : A Bunch of Grapes.—The Chalice.

Second Prelude. Prayer, as before.

CONSIDERATION.

The Vine is the emblem of gladness and fruitfulness. Gladness of heart, fruitfulness in good works, come from JESUS, the True Vine. By partaking of the fruit of this Vine, we ourselves become branches of the Vine, and must bear the fruit of good works and spiritual gladness. As wheat must be ground before it can be made into bread, so grapes must be pressed before they can be made into wine. Thus the Christian who is crushed and pressed by affliction and temptation gives forth sweet juice for the wine of gladness, and the greater the pressure the more the good works. To sit under his own vine was the dearly-loved privilege of the son of Abraham ; to sit under the True Vine is the joy of the Child of God ; to form part of the True Vine is the unspeakable happiness of the Catholic who believes in the Sacramental Life.

APPLICATION.

‘I am the True Vine, ye are the branches.’ This was said to me as well as to the disciples. How am I fulfilling my great vocation ? How am I using my privileges ? A barren branch does harm to all the rest. It will be cut

out and thrown away. To receive gladness, and to give gladness, is the part of a true Christian. How can I expect spiritual joy if I neglect to receive the Blood of CHRIST, which is the wine of gladness? If I seek joy in the world's manner, I cannot be astonished at my failure; the world gives its good wine first, and then, when men have well drunk, that which is worse. It is JESUS only who keeps the good wine for the last. If I come simply and humbly to drink of His chalice, I shall receive His joy, and be enabled to impart it to others. If I grow into His Vine I shall be fruitful, and whether I bear the white grapes of good works, or the purple grapes of suffering, I shall be helping to fulfil the work of my LORD in His Church.

AFFECTION.

O True Vine! give me of Thy sweetness, Thy fruitfulness. I thank Thee for making me a part of Thee! May Thy Life give strength to my weak life, Thy great gladness give joy to my sad heart!

Resolutions:

1. To seek joy at the Altar.
2. To give joy to others.
3. To avoid every thought which may hinder the action of 'the wine that bringeth forth virgins.'

THOUGHT.

'Abide in me, and I in you.'

The Lion of Judah.

First Prelude. Picture : A Lion, the Standard of the Tribe of Judah.

Second Prelude. Prayer, as before.

CONSIDERATION.

Satan is a lion, but a lion going about seeking whom he may devour. JESUS is a Lion, but a Lion for the defence of His people. The lion is full of courage and boldness. He is said to be a generous foe, that will not attack the fallen. JESUS is full of justice and courage, but how kind and gracious to those who fear Him ! The Standard of the Royal Tribe of Judah, He is the ensign to which all the tribes of the whole world look. In life He is full of boldness, condemning the worldliness of the Scribes and Pharisees, calling the Jews a generation of vipers, speaking the truth regardless of consequences ; in death 'out of the eater cometh forth sweetness ;' the honey is sweet though the lion be dead, and as the breath of the lion is said to invigorate his young, so the breath of JESUS CHRIST is the Life of the Church.

APPLICATION.

The Christian character must show courage, as well as sweetness. Have I been satisfied with trying to attain a certain standard of mildness and amiability, without seeking to perfect myself in holy courage and boldness ?

Do I agree with everybody and praise everybody, thinking myself a pattern of Christian kindness and forbearance, when in truth I am only indulging a vain self-complacency and a foolish desire of popularity? Let me remember that the true follower of the Lion of Judah must pray for a holy boldness as well as a gentle charity; the divine fire, as well as the divine sweetness. All amiable weaknesses, such as encouraging the faults of others, must be at once forsaken; all vain excuses for folly and crime must be heard no more. I must love the sinner, but my duty to my God constrains me to hate the sin.

AFFECTION.

O Lion of Judah! full of courage and full of sweetness, help me to follow Thy courageous life and death. Give me the holy boldness which can rebuke vice without losing charity, and grant that I may never make a compromise with sin.

Resolutions :

1. To battle courageously with my own besetting sin.
2. To tell the truth concerning his sin to such a person.
3. Not to hide my own opinion through false shame.

THOUGHT.

‘It is God that girdeth me with strength.’

The Joy of Angels.

First Prelude. Picture : The procession of angels going forth to meet our LORD on His ascension.

Second Prelude. Prayer, as before.

CONSIDERATION.

The joy of the angels is joy in the Incarnation. With their holy wisdom, with their bright unselfishness, they rejoice in the Incarnation because it is the medium of God's gift to man ; the meeting-point of the Divine and human natures. This joy of the angels is a continual protest against envy, jealousy, and all that means sorrow at another's good, which we see so frequently here upon earth. This joy extends itself into worship ; the third part of the angels, led by Satan, refused to worship God Incarnate, and they fell, and lost that joy, that worship, for evermore. This joy of the angels extends to the extension of the Incarnation, which is the Holy Eucharist. Hence the ancient belief that angels are the guardians of the Altar ; and St. Paul distinctly says that the angels are present at the divine service of the Church. They are present with their Joy ; what a wonderful worship is this, where the inhabitants of heaven and earth can meet together !

APPLICATION.

What are my thoughts of the Incarnation ? Are they thoughts of gratitude as well as joy ? If JESUS CHRIST is the Joy of the angels whose state does not appear to

have been changed by the Incarnation, what should I not feel with regard to Him who has changed the whole condition of my relationship to GOD? And yet how seldom is my worship a joyful worship. Instead of looking on JESUS as my Joy, my thoughts are all centred on myself, and there I see little cause for joy! Let me learn a lesson from the angels who rejoice at the salvation of others; and looking out from my own personal state and feelings, let me throw myself into the great flood of joy poured forth by the whole Catholic Church, let me rejoice in the presence of the angels at her altars, let me glory in the great company of the redeemed. The great feature of Christian worship is thanksgiving, as the great feature of heathen worship was deprecation; the Eucharist, 'The giving of thanks,' is my vocation, the sacrifice of the Holy Catholic Church joined to the everlasting lauds of the angels!

AFFECTION.

O LORD JESUS CHRIST! Everlasting Joy of the Angels! we beseech Thee to be the everlasting Joy of men also, that we may be united in a worship well-pleasing to Thee, and look for Thy coming again upon earth as the angels looked for Thy return to Heaven!

Resolutions:

1. To banish gloom from my religion.
2. To bring joy into the religion of others.
3. To rejoice at everything which ministers to the spiritual joy of another.

THOUGHT.

'By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to GOD continually.'

The Beloved Son.

First Prelude. Picture : Our LORD coming up out of the river Jordan, the heavens opening.

Second Prelude. Prayer, as before.

CONSIDERATION.

Twice did the FATHER proclaim the Son as Beloved. At the river Jordan, on the Mount of Tabor, these awful accents were heard, 'This is My Beloved Son.' The first time on His entrance into public life, the first year of His ministry ; the second time towards the close of it, in the third year of His witness. The first time at His Baptism, the second time at His Transfiguration ; the first time before His Temptation, the second time before His Agony. The Beloved One must enter into sorrow, in the furnace of affliction pure love must be tried. The most Beloved in Heaven or on earth was the One selected for the greatest trials and tortures, the Heart that loved GOD and man more deeply than any heart that ever beat, must be pierced by man and forsaken by GOD. In Him all things were fulfilled. 'Whom the LORD loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.'

APPLICATION.

I am adopted into my SAVIOUR's privileges, am I resolved to follow Him in His sufferings? Twice have I heard the FATHER's voice saying, 'This is My Beloved Son.' Once in my Baptism, secondly in my Confirmation.

Many a time too at the Holy Eucharist ; sometimes also in great sorrow. Shall I hear it again before my death ? I must realise this great fact, that all love entails a certain amount of suffering. Suffering in striving against sin, suffering in being made worthy of the loved One, suffering in seeing the loved One despised, suffering in knowing that many will reject Him altogether. We may hear that we are beloved sons at the river of Baptism ; on the mountain of Communion : but we must know it and feel it also amidst the loneliness of the Valley of the Shadow of Death, or the mocking of the crowd in the Judgment Hall. We cannot have one portion without the other, we cannot have the adoption without the suffering. Do I murmur at suffering, or do I welcome it as an earnest of my adoption ?

AFFECTION.

O JESUS, Beloved Son of the FATHER, who hast shown me the way to suffer and to love, grant me so to follow the path of Thy sufferings, that I may be united with Thee in Thy sonship for evermore.

Resolutions :

1. To be willing to endure, knowing that the Son chose the hardest path.
2. To watch against temptation after times of great grace.
3. To look upon my sufferings as marks of God's love.

THOUGHT.

' Him hath GOD the FATHER sealed.'

Refuge of the Oppressed.

First Prelude. Picture: The shadow of a great Rock in a weary land.

Second Prelude. Prayer, as before.

CONSIDERATION.

The SAVIOUR is standing with hands outstretched to receive all who come unto Him. All who are oppressed by poverty, worn down with illness, harassed by the ill-treatment or the bad temper of others. The worst oppression is that of Satan ; the oppression of the world, the flesh, and the devil. Who has not felt the oppression of the besetting sin?—The most trying, the most disheartening of all. And yet even from this, CHRIST is our Refuge. He is a covert from the tempest, a City of Refuge from the avenger. The seven Cities of Refuge were but types of Him ; they were the refuge of those who had sinned through accident. He is a Refuge unto seventy times seven of those who have sinned in every way, provided only they repent and turn to Him.

APPLICATION.

When suffering from the evil deeds of others, have I turned to this great Refuge and told Him all about it, or have I taken the law into my own hands and tried to revenge myself? When heavy-laden with my besetting sin, a sin which seems always ready to torment me, have

I laid the sin and the temptation before Him, and prayed Him to undertake its removal ; or have I fretted myself into evil tempers over it, and made things worse than before?

Have I tried to be like CHRIST in becoming a refuge for the oppressed? There are many I know of in sickness and in sorrow ; what have I done to comfort them? There are many oppressed with sin, perhaps they have wished to tell me their spiritual troubles, and I have discouraged them by my want of love and tenderness. May I imitate more closely the sympathy of my SAVIOUR, and be, like Him, a refuge for all who suffer.

AFFECTION.

O dear LORD, full of love and tenderness, grant that I may be like Thee in caring for all who are in trouble, that when I have myself found the True Refuge, I may lead others to it, that we may rejoice together in Thy love.

Resolutions :

1. To tell JESUS my trouble, before I tell it to others.
2. To listen very patiently to the troubles of others.
3. To esteem the sorrows of others worthy of more attention than my own pursuits.

THOUGHT.

‘Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden.’

King of the Patriarchs.

First Prelude. Picture : The Tree of the Church growing by the Waterside.

Second Prelude. Prayer, as before.

CONSIDERATION.

King Saul was a head and shoulders taller than any of the people. The King of the Patriarchs is greater than even those grand fathers of the Hebrew race. The beauty of Adam, the piety of Enoch, the perseverance of Noah, the generosity of Abraham, the gentleness of Isaac, the devotion of Jacob, the purity of Joseph, the meekness of Moses, the courage of Joshua, the love of David, the wisdom of Solomon, were all united in JESUS CHRIST, the King, the Example, the Father, the Friend of them all. 'Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.' The Patriarchs looked forward, as we look back, and now they look back with an eternal thrill of joy to that time of the evening sacrifice, on the first Good Friday, when the gates of hell burst open to receive the Conqueror, their Deliverer.

APPLICATION.

If we choose we may be the patriarchs of a glorious spiritual race. JESUS CHRIST is the Head of an immense spiritual line—the true Israel, the baptized children of

GOD. All who are winning souls for Him are sharers in His mighty Fatherhood. The blessing of the Old Testament was the promise of abundant offspring according to the flesh ; the blessing of the New is abundance of spiritual children. The blessing of the Old Testament is to sit under the vine and the fig-tree. The promise of the New is to enjoy the fruits of the HOLY GHOST. The children of this world are wiser in this generation than the children of light.—Each will cultivate some art, or follow some aim. Do I cultivate one virtue? Have I one spiritual child? Have I ever led any to the knowledge of CHRIST, to the acknowledgment of Him as their FATHER? Have I ever added to that long line of descent, the spiritual Israel? If not, I am faithless to the King of the Patriarchs. What hinders me? Selfishness? Cowardice? Hiding my talent in the earth? Want of spiritual life? Deadness? Coldness?

AFFECTION.

O great King of the Patriarchs ! Renew my life, my energies ; make me full of spiritual strength ; give me grace to combat my sloth, my selfishness, that I may not be a worthless branch, a barren fig-tree.

Resolutions :

1. To study and aim at one particular virtue.
2. To teach one soul how to pray.
3. To see whether some one soul does not need helping to the higher life.

THOUGHT.

‘I am the First and the Last.’

Theme of the Prophets.

First Prelude. Picture : JESUS walking with the two disciples to Emmaus.

Second Prelude. Prayer, as before.

CONSIDERATION.

Four major Prophets, twelve minor Prophets, answering to four Evangelists and twelve Apostles ; four major Prophets to sound the trumpet to the four quarters of the world, twelve minor prophets to rouse the twelve tribes of Israel—four the number of a man, twelve the number of nations. All these sing one song, the song of the LAMB. The song of the LAMB, past, present, and future. What He has done, what He is doing, what He is going to do. What JESUS CHRIST did as the Second Person of the Holy Trinity ; what He is doing in the government of nations, their rewards and punishments ; what He is going to do as the sacrifice for the world ; what He is going to do as the judge of the world. That name, JESUS CHRIST, 'Saviour anointed,' is the golden key which opens all the mysteries.

APPLICATION.

Do I search for JESUS in the writings of the Prophets ? Is it my delight to study the fulfilment of the prophecies which have come to pass, and to look forward to the fulfilling of those which have not ? Or do I regard the

Hebrew prophecies only as very beautiful poetry, or perhaps as the foreshadowing of interesting historical facts, such as the rise and fall of different nations?

When our LORD walked with the two disciples to Emmaus He taught them how to find Him, beginning at Moses and the Prophets. The early Fathers of the Church followed His Divine method of interpretation. The modern method argues, questions, disputes, treats as open opinions the things which have long been decided by JESUS CHRIST Himself. Let me humbly follow in the steps of the ancient saints, and walking with our LORD through the mazes of prophecy learn of Him to find the New Testament enclosed in the Old, the Old Testament unfolded by the New.

AFFECTION.

O wonderful theme of the Prophets! Glorious teacher of Thine Own Word, teach me to find Thee in the Prophets, and to carry Thy teachings forth into my life. Let the fulfilment of the prophecies of the past teach me to look forward to the fulfilment of the prophecies of the future, and may each new teaching fill me with love to Thee and veneration for Thy glory!

Resolutions :

1. To avoid books upon Holy Scripture which are written by unbelievers.
2. To follow the method of the Catholic Church in the interpretation of Scripture.
3. To begin and follow the study of one of the Prophets under the guidance of a good Catholic writer.

THOUGHT.

‘Thy word is life.’

Jesus, Master of the Apostles.

First Prelude. Picture : JESUS teaching the Twelve.

Second Prelude. Prayer, as before.

CONSIDERATION.

A small college of students, only twelve, smaller than many a Sunday-school class nowadays : a tiny college, but what a Head ! Four fishermen, a tax-gatherer, a thief, one man of gentle birth—for such Nathaniel is said to have been—and we know not what the other five were—perhaps one or two were carpenters, perhaps gardeners, perhaps also fishermen. A three years' course, and what disappointments ! One betrayed Him, one denied Him, one refused to believe in Him, all forsook Him and fled. And what patience had been bestowed upon them ! Parable after parable, mystery after mystery, action after action. Gentle preparation ; as in that wonderful Eucharistic teaching twelve months before the mystery of the Blessed Sacrament was unveiled to them ! Plain and decisive words about His own wonderful death, for which St. Peter rebuked Him ! Grand exhortation upon the mountain, to be repaid by His kinsmen with ' He is beside Himself ! '

APPLICATION.

I am a learner in the school of the Apostles, and what patience has the MASTER bestowed upon me ! I

have St. Peter's rashness without his devotedness, St. John's ambition without His love, St. Thomas's unbelief without his eager confession, St. Philip's slowness without his steadiness—all the faults of all the Apostles without their self-sacrifice and without their love ! I may even have betrayed my MASTER to the world, like Judas, and yet not feel Judas's remorse ! What patience the MASTER has with me : over and over again He teaches me the same thing, but I will not learn ; and, alas ! I have no patience with others ! When I have to teach, stupidity annoys me, perverseness provokes me, slowness depresses me, and ingratitude exasperates me ! I will not have sufficient faith in Him who can send the Pentecostal fires to turn the weaknesses of human nature into the strength of God.

AFFECTION.

O glorious MASTER of the Apostles ! Eternal Wisdom ! I honour and worship Thy Divine knowledge, Thy gentle perseverance ! I pray Thee give me patience and hope, for myself and for others, that I may sit at the feet of the Holy Apostles and learn from them what they have learnt from Thee, and draw others into the Fold of Thy Church !

Resolutions :

1. To learn with humility.
2. To teach with patience.
3. To learn something, and to teach something every day.

THOUGHT.

'Their sound is gone out into all lands, and their words unto the ends of the world.'

Jesus, Teacher of the Evangelists.

First Prelude. Picture : The four living creatures full of eyes.

Second Prelude. Prayer, as before.

CONSIDERATION.

Four teachers for the four quarters of the globe. One Teacher for those four. The Gospels are the simplest, the easiest books in the world to some hearts ; the most difficult, the most puzzling to others. The accusation of JESUS was written over His head in Hebrew, in Latin, and in Greek. The life of JESUS was written threefold, one for the Hebrews, one for the Latins, one for the Greeks—St. Matthew's, St. Mark's, and St. Luke's ; and the last, St. John's, the divinest of all, was written for all—the easiest in language, the sublimest in ideas. Who taught them what to write and what to leave out ? St. John tells us that the world could not contain the books which should hold all the words and deeds of his Beloved MASTER. Upon what principle was this selection made ? Behold the study of a lifetime ! A selection of words, a selection of deeds ; how brief, how easy to carry about, how full of meaning, how different to the voluminous lives which are now published, lives of persons even still in the world ! The First and the Last, the Beginning and the End, all set forth in a few chapters.

APPLICATION.

Have I ever considered how thankful I ought to be for this marvellous gift? Have I ever studied it as I ought? Do I think I know it thoroughly, or that the Gospels are too simple to claim much of my attention? Have I ever realised *Who* decreed how much was to be told, how much to be held back? What numberless miracles, what numberless parables of which we know nothing! The four Gospels simply gather together samples of the LORD's sayings and doings, and they are written for my 'example.' Study first, then imitation; look well at the likeness and then proceed to copy it; copy the perfect love of the man, the boldness of the lion, the labour of the ox, the contemplation of the eagle gazing on the sun.

AFFECTION.

O LORD JESUS! Thou didst endow Thine Evangelists with wonderful wisdom; give me the grace to study their wisdom, and to follow the example there divinely set forth. Teach me to copy what Thou hast taught them to write, and may no earthly attractions ever lead me from the holy study of Thy glorious life.

Resolutions:

1. To study one Gospel with all my mind.
2. To read no secular Lives of CHRIST which may destroy my reverence for the Gospels.
3. In all my doubts to ask this question, 'What would Jesus do?'

THOUGHT.

'To me to live is CHRIST.'

Jesus, Strength of the Martyrs.

First Prelude. Picture : St. Stephen beholding our LORD in the heavens.

Second Prelude. Prayer, as before.

CONSIDERATION.

The LORD Himself deigned to encourage His servants with His presence in the hour of their greatest need. He was present to the eyes of St. Stephen at his death. He stood by St. Paul at his trial ; great grace is given to great need. St. Polycarp felt not the fire that consumed him, and Ignatius had no fear of the wild beasts. The child St. Agnes endured unheard-of tortures before the Roman mob. The mother St. Perpetua gave up children, husband, father, that she might have the privilege of dying for the LORD. What was the secret of their constancy ? The strength poured into them by the MASTER whom they served. The Eye of Faith saw far into the realms of cloudless light, and though invisible to the executioners, He was visible to the sufferers. Fortitude, so well known to the virtuous pagan, has triumphed again and again in ancient Greece and Rome, but though patriotism and the love of glory can cause men to die for their country, it is only faith and supernatural strength which can make men die for The Crucified.

APPLICATION.

I shall perhaps never be called upon to die the death of the martyrs. Why then should I seek for their strength? I must seek it because the martyrdom of the will, the martyrdom of the passions, the martyrdom of daily life must be mine. A martyr is a witness. I need not die a violent death in order to be a witness for CHRIST; I must be a witness for Him by doing His will, by mortifying my passions, by bearing the ills of daily life with calmness. The early Christians sought for strength by communicating daily. To them this was the meaning of 'Give us this day our daily bread.' Do I neglect this means of strength? If I have the opportunity and use it not, I have no right to complain of want of strength. And though a violent death may seem unlikely, we never know what may be our fate. In his Retreat Notes, the Père Ollivaint regrets bitterly that he can never be a martyr. Some years afterwards he was shot with the Archbishop of Paris. Let me be ready for all things, and, seeking the sacramental presence of CHRIST, be willing to witness for Him in my life or in my death.

AFFECTION.

O Strength of the martyrs, be my strength in all I have to undergo! I thank Thee for the love Thou hast shown to Thy servants by supporting them in their time of trial; I pray that I may never neglect the means of gaining strength for my soul.

Resolutions:

1. To seek the presence of CHRIST with the special view of obtaining strength.

2. To bring my thoughts, words, and actions into discipline.
3. To remember that each day, and all day long, I am a 'witness' for good or for evil.

THOUGHT.

'I will love Thee, O LORD, my *strength*.'

Jesus, the Crown of all Saints.

First Prelude. Picture: A Crown of Heavenly Light.

Second Prelude. Prayer, as before.

CONSIDERATION.

The Saints have each their peculiar crown, but they have one crown in common, JESUS their LORD. The ancients had a crown for each kind of triumph; they had the mural crown, the military crown, the naval crown—for war; and they had crowns of flowers for festivals, and crowns of parsley and of olive for games. The soldiers and servants of JESUS have each the crown of their own particular virtue, their own particular trial, the crown of martyrdom, the crown of purity, the crown of good works, the crown of devotion; but there is one crown common to all, and this crown is the possession of

JESUS their LORD. And as JESUS is the reward, so JESUS is the completion, of all ; one saint may have humility, another saint meekness, another diligence, another love ; but in JESUS all virtues are gathered up and crowned ; all humility, all meekness, all diligence, and all love find themselves twined together in the Crown of Glory which He alone can wear, and in this Crown all the saints have part, for they are one with Him.

APPLICATION.

JESUS is the crown of all saints. Will He be my crown? Am I trying to be a saint? If not, He can never be my crown. And how is this crown to be gained? By losing all thought of self, and seeking His glory only. If I look for this heavenly crown, I must not spend my life in seeking for the various earthly crowns which attract the eyes of mortals ; the crowns of kings and princes, the coronets of nobles, the wreath of laurel or of bay, the crown of riches and prosperity. But I must press forward to the greater prize—the Crown of JESUS, the crown of all Saints. This is the only prize worth having, because it is the perfect gift of the only Perfect One, and it is Himself. Is JESUS my pride and glory now? If not, He can never be my crown hereafter, for I shall never be a saint.

AFFECTION.

O LORD, the Crown of all saints ! I worship Thine infinite glory ! Gather me into the great company of Thy saints by killing self within me, for as long as I worship self I cannot worship Thee ; and Thou art my glory and my joy.

Resolutions :

1. To be determined to become a saint.
2. Never to seek for an earthly reward.
3. To do my best in everything, but to have no ambition out of CHRIST.

THOUGHT.

'Jesus only.'

Jesus, Light of the Confessors.

First Prelude. Picture : Daniel praying with his window open.

Second Prelude. Prayer, as before.

CONSIDERATION.

A confessor is not a martyr, but he may have to endure as much as a martyr. A confessor is one who shows forth bravely before men that CHRIST is his Master. This duty of confessing CHRIST before men is one much neglected in these days. How often do we hear it said when a man dies, 'I never knew he was a religious man ; how little we thought he cared for these things.' This man, then, never could have confessed CHRIST before men. He may have been a good man in

secret, but he lost the joy of glorying in the Cross. We are no longer called upon to face fire and sword in order to confess CHRIST ; but if we are truly serving Him, it will be impossible for us to avoid in some way clashing with the world. Abstaining from some amusement at unseasonable times, keeping a fast or a vigil when others neglect it, refusing to fall in with the lax practices of society, declining to accept the standard of the world with regard to religious observances—all these things may bring upon us taunts, obloquy, or, at the best, good-natured contempt, as being ‘odd, weak-minded, priest-ridden.’

APPLICATION.

Have I ever been ashamed of my religious practices? Have I ever endeavoured to conceal them when with people who do not agree with me? If so, I have lost the joy of confessing CHRIST before men. A little thing becomes of great importance when a principle is set forth by it. An apparently small practice is not to be given up when it is a matter of obedience to GOD or the Church. At the same time I must be very careful not to offend others by contending for trifles which are of private judgment, or simply matters of taste. This is not confessing CHRIST, but contending for my own opinion. JESUS is the Light of Confessors. He teaches them what to hold fast and what to let go, and in order to be sure of my ground I must live in His light. I must conquer my egotism, which is sure to lead me wrong, either by making me seek the praise of men, or causing me to run counter to their prejudices in order to be remarkable. His light will throw all things into true perspective.

AFFECTION.

LORD JESUS ! True Light of Confessors ! Be my light, and help me to confess Thee in all things. Let me not confess myself when I think I am confessing Thee, but remove from me cowardice and rashness, and grant that I may stand firmly for Thy truth.

Resolutions :

1. To state my convictions openly and without fear.
2. Not to let anything pass unproved which is to the dishonour of my LORD.
3. To turn difficulties into opportunities.

THOUGHT.

‘Whoso confesseth Me before men, him will I also confess before MY FATHER which is in heaven.’

Jesus, Bridegroom of the Church.

First Prelude. Picture : The new Jerusalem coming down from God.

Second Prelude. Prayer, as before.

CONSIDERATION.

Think of the sacramental nature of marriage. It is indissoluble ; it lasts for ever ; it grows in joy and love as years increase. It is the most intimate union on earth ; it is the holiest and the most entrancing. But to be all this, it requires a special grace, conferred by the blessing of the Church, which transforms simple marriage into Holy Matrimony, and causes it to become the type of the union of CHRIST and His Church. JESUS CHRIST came to seek His Bride on earth, His espousals took place on the Cross, but the Bride is not yet purified, and He is waiting until she is spotless and undivided. Then the marriage supper will take place. But first we must have the Reunion of Christendom, for when was a Bride divided against herself? The work of Christians upon earth is to hasten this union, and to promote the oneness of the Bride in order that she may be one with CHRIST.

APPLICATION.

Purity and union. What am I doing to promote these two things? The Church is made up of units, and if each unit would seek purity and union, the coming of the Bridegroom would not long be delayed. I must seek and maintain purity of faith and purity of conduct. Next, I must cultivate the spirit of true charity, not the spirit which condones heresy and schism and gives away the things which belong to God, but the spirit of love which seeks to draw all men to the true faith by gentleness and prayer. And I must not forget that I have the promise of the intimate union with CHRIST, inasmuch as my soul is part of His Bride ; and as the LORD at the marriage in

Cana caused the last wine to be the best, so the joy of that union will be an ever-increasing joy. Am I living in joyful expectation of that union?

AFFECTION.

O LORD JESUS CHRIST, Bridegroom of the Church, we pray Thee to come quickly to fetch Thy Bride. Purify her day by day; make all the members of the Church one with each other and one with Thee, and grant that none of us, by word or deed, may hinder or delay the coming of Thy glorious marriage day.

Resolutions :

1. To maintain the sacredness of Holy Matrimony.
2. To pray for the Reunion of Christendom.
3. To remember that I have part in the Song of songs, read by the light of the Revelation of St. John.

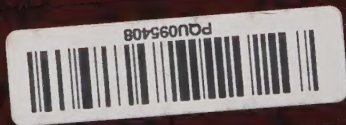
THOUGHT.

‘My dove, my undefiled, is but one.’



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